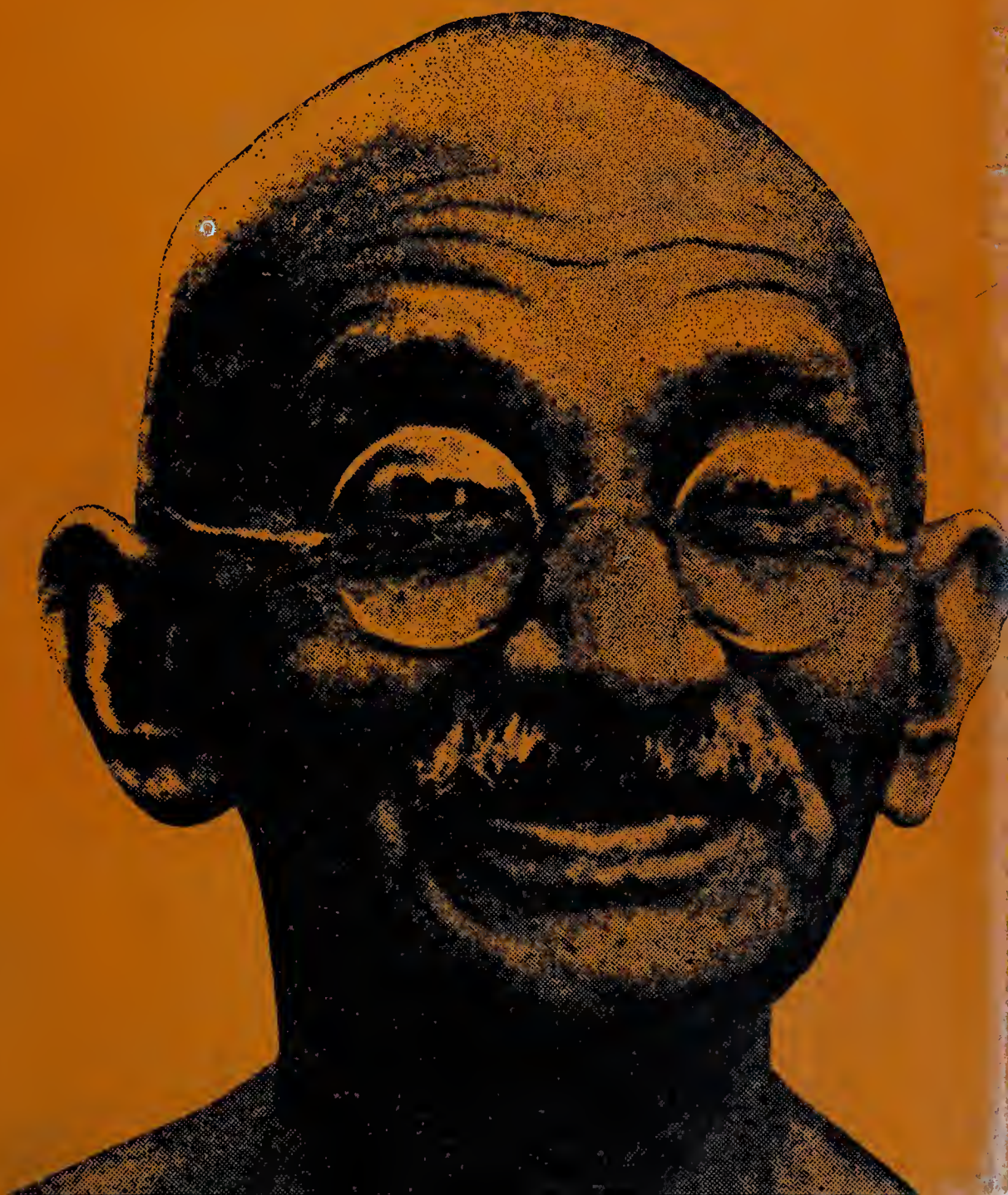


Non-Violence or Non-Existence

Satish Kumar

introduces the Gandhian ideology
of a non-violent society



In this book, which takes the form of a dialogue between the author and an interlocutor, Satish Kumar expounds Mahatma Gandhi's concept of the New Society. He maintains that the political and economic problems harrasing mankind today stem from the centralization of power. The human virtues of Non-Violence and Truth cannot thrive in such a wilderness and can only do so when the people themselves enrich and till the soil of government by direct participation.

The author spells out the advantages of a partyless democracy, deeply and firmly grounded in local self-government, along the lines of the flourishing Village Republics of the Indian *Gramdan* movement. Socialism with Spirituality and Revolution with Responsibility are the dynamics of this experiment. Wealth, he declares, is as ugly as poverty. Rule by technocrats and bureaucrats is soul-destroying.

Satish Kumar exposes the dismal failure of our contemporary economy with its production-consumption structure and shows the way for a total revolution.

As a tribute, in his Centenary Year, to Mahatma Gandhi, the greatest non-violent revolutionary of them all, Christian Action presents this thought-provoking book.

BUDAPEST INTERNATIONAL

A publication of Radio Budapest, Hungary
Bródy Sándor utca 5/7. Budapest VII.

October 1969.

* *transcript here with*

GANDHI IN THE SEVENTIES

The impact of the thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi on world peace will be the subject of a seminar sponsored by the World Peace Council and the War Resisters' International in Budapest from September 29th to October 1st. When Mr. Romesh Chandra, Secretary General of the World Peace Council announced the holding of the Seminar, he said each day would be devoted to one aspect of peace. The first day will cover Gandhi's impact on the struggle for disarmament, the second day

will be devoted to the problems of independence, and the third day to the problem of hunger and underdevelopment.

Experts from many parts of the world are expected to attend this event which is seen as one of the most significant of the Gandhi Centenary Year. Among the Hungarian participants will be Dr. József Bogнар, Head of the Institute for Cultural Relations, and Professor Gyula Germanus.

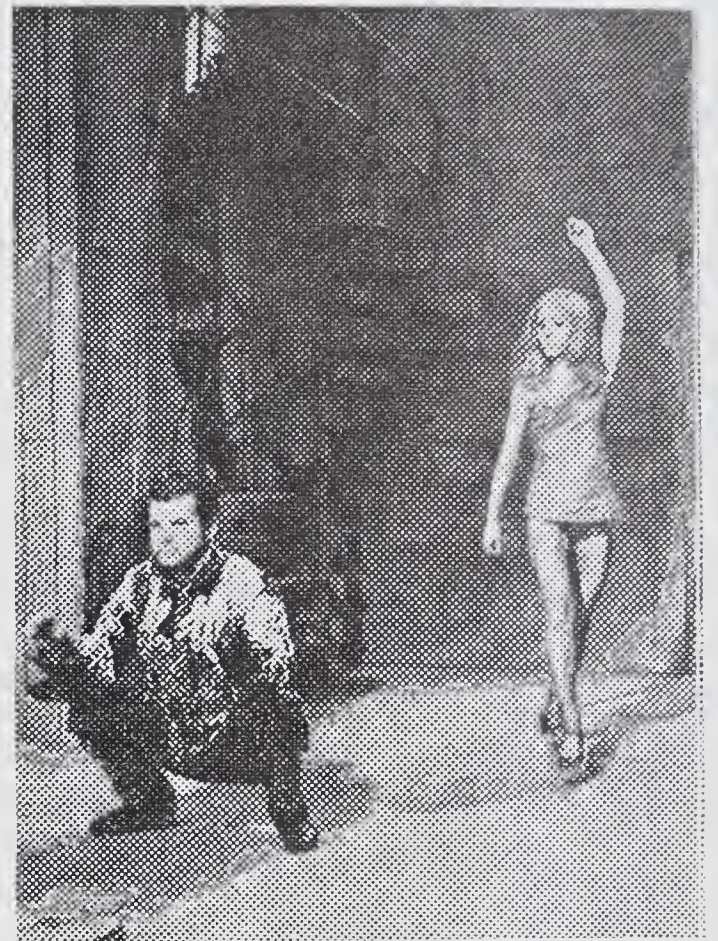
Professor Germanus, who will act as Honorary President of the Seminar, knew Gandhi, and has written two books about him. He first met Gandhi in May of 1930, when the Hungarian professor was at the Chair of Islamic Studies at Santiniketan University.

It is, therefore, a considerable success for Radio Budapest that Professor Germanus has agreed to follow the Seminar with a special feature for our English broadcasts. In it, the Professor, and other participants in the Seminar, will look at how Gandhi's thought is likely to continue to influence the world of the Seventies.

GANDHI IN THE SEVENTIES will be broadcast on October 14th and 15th.



Romesh Chandra of the World Peace Council meets 84 year old philosopher György Lukács in Budapest. The two world peace leaders were at the meeting where Romesh Chandra gave details of the Gandhi Seminar.



The Pécs Modern Ballet in Bartók's *Miraculous Mandarin* (See *THIS WEEK* for October 11th and 12th).

RADIO BUDAPEST PROGRAMMES to November 2nd

TRANSMISSIONS TO EUROPE

- I. 8.30—9.00 pm BST—16.8, 25.2, 30.5, 42.2, 48.1 metres
II. 10.30—11.00 pm BST 25.2, 30.5, 42.2, 41.6, 48.1 metres (11,910, 9,833, 7,220, 7,110, 6,234 kilocycles)

TRANSMISSIONS TO NORTH AMERICA EST

- 8.00—8.30 pm
10.00—10.30 pm
11.00—11.30 pm

GMT

- I. 1.00—1.30 am—16.8, 19.8, 25.2, 30.5, 48.1 metres
II. 3.00—3.30 am 19.8, 25.2, 30.5, 48.1 metres
I. 4.00—4.30 am — as above (15,150, 11,910, 9,833, 6,234 kilocycles)

TRANSMISSIONS TO FAR EAST, OCEANIA AND ASIA

- Wednesday — 8 am GMT — 13.8, 16.8, 19.8, 25.2 metres
Friday — 10.15 am GMT — as above (21,665, 17,795, 11,910, 15,160 kilocycles)

Your comments on our programmes are welcome!

OCTOBER 6th—12th

6th — MONDAY

I. NEWS

Spotlight — On The National Peace Conference

Press and People

II. NEWS

Sports News
Rapid Requests

7th — TUESDAY

I. NEWS

Commentary
A New Frontier In Therapy

— Budapest's Locomotive Therapy Institute is already world famous. Now it is expanding its facilities and increasing the courses provided for British and American therapists.

II. NEWS

Commentary
Calling DXers and Radio Amateurs

8th — WEDNESDAY

I. NEWS

Commentary
Leave It to the Panel

— A listener wants to know how cooperatives repay State loans. Do they have to pay big interest rates?

II. NEWS

Commentary
A New Frontier In Therapy

9th — THURSDAY

I. NEWS

Commentary
Your Leonardo Or Mine?

— Museums in London, Dublin, New York and Budapest hold identical equestrian bronze figures. They are all attributed to Leonardo da Vinci. But which is the original? This is just one of the questions the world's art historians will have been discussing at their congress in Budapest.

II. NEWS

Commentary
World Of Music

— Excerpts from Budapest concerts with the Dresden State Orchestra, I Musici di Roma, Lamberto Gardelli, Henryk Szeryng and Andre Watts.

10th — FRIDAY

I. NEWS

Commentary
World Of Music

II. NEWS

Commentary
Your Leonardo Or Mine?

11th — SATURDAY

I. NEWS

Commentary
Rapid Requests

II. NEWS

Commentary
THIS WEEK AT THE DANCE

— Not really a ballroom affair, but the This Week team has a ball with Bartók's Miraculous Mandarin, Cuban Modern Dance and the Fécès Ballet.

12th — SUNDAY

I. Calling DXers and Radio Amateurs

THIS WEEK

II. Press and People

Leave it to the Panel



The Leonardo da Vinci equestrian figure from a Budapest museum. (See YOUR LEONARDO OR MINE? on Thursday and Friday of this week).

OCTOBER 13th—19th

13th — MONDAY

I. NEWS

Spotlight
Press and People

II. NEWS

Sports News
Rapid Requests

14th — TUESDAY

I. NEWS

GANDHI IN THE SEVENTIES
(see Page 1)

II. NEWS

Commentary
Calling DXers and Radio Amateurs

15th — WEDNESDAY

I. NEWS

Commentary
ON THE HOUSE

— Oldest city
— Biggest animals
— Best singers

II. NEWS

GANDHI IN THE SEVENTIES
(See Page 1)

16th — THURSDAY

I. NEWS

Commentary
AIR CONDITIONED TREASURES
Ten million forints are to be spent on the renovation of the Christian Art Museum at Esztergom. Air conditioning will help preserve the priceless treasures held in the Museum; just one of the many interesting things you can hear in this survey of Museum Month.

II. NEWS

Commentary
KEY BOARD HISTORY
Morning concerts with a purpose in Budapest.

17th — FRIDAY

I. NEWS

Report from the opening day of the WORLD TRADE UNION CONGRESS

KEY BOARD HISTORY

II. NEWS

Report from World Trade Union Congress
AIR CONDITIONED TREASURES

18th — SATURDAY

I. NEWS

Commentary
Rapid Requests

II. NEWS

Commentary

THIS WEEK AT THE THEATRE
The team looks at the Drama Week introducing new works by Gyula Illyés, Sándor Szokolay, István Csúka, Gábor Goda, and Tibor Déry.

19th — SUNDAY

I. Calling DXers and Radio Amateurs
THIS WEEK

II. Press and People
ON THE HOUSE

how medieval Italian *laude* had come to influence the "new type" of Hungarian folksong, while the "old type" showed purely Eastern relationships. In *A History of Melody*, he describes how a Renaissance art-melody, itself a revival of a Latin metre, turns into a Protestant chorale and then into folk-variants, of which he had discovered Czech and Hungarian examples.

But not only does Szabolcsi believe that art-music is related to folk-music, but that music as a whole is related to other sciences of man. "Man and Nature are inseparable allies: one may speak for the other." This attitude makes him, musically speaking, an explorer, an anthropologist, an archaeologist, even a geo-biologist. He is constantly checking up musical research against progress in all these sciences because of his belief that the earliest history of man may come to be discerned from the present-day geographical distribution of melody-patterns. The original forms are nowhere extant, but the forms which exist point back to a vanished continent.

How did he come to attempt such a mammoth undertaking as *A History of Melody*? Certainly the germ of interest was there even in the D.Phil. thesis for Leipzig (a study of Benedetti and Saracini from the point of view of monody), and it grew over the years 1930-40: but it was not until life was limited to a cellar in Budapest with Russians and Germans battling for the city above, that it began to take final shape. "What will remain if everything is destroyed? Perhaps melody will show the traces..." In German it is modestly described as *ein Baustein*—a basis of a history—but as well as laying a foundation it is also a stepping-stone to further research.

His aesthetic awareness extends to painting as well as to literature: one of the most enchanting passages is where he describes the influence of 18th century dance through a description of Watteau's paintings. He takes the utmost care in choosing illustrations so that they really express his meaning in another medium. He is aware of the "sound" of painting, just as he is aware of the visual values of music, and of what he calls the "polyphonic intricacy of experience." His literary style has been forged into a highly personal idiom, full of allusion, and one of the difficulties of translation has been that to do him justice one should write in the 17th century style of Sir Thomas Browne, with long periods and suspensions. "His Hungarian floats above the earth," as one perceptive reader put it.

What is his most striking quality, beyond his erudition, his formidable musical memory, his sensibility? I would say empathy, and facility in communication. Szabolcsi can immerse himself in his chosen subject, and then make his experience valid for others.

Composer, Summer 1966.

SURVEYS

JÓZSEF BOGNÁR

GANDHI'S HUNDREDTH BIRTHDAY *

Mahatma Gandhi was one of the great men of the 20th-century. He combined an understanding of what modern politics required with a living faith in the traditional system of values of India and all mankind. We live in the age of computers, of huge enterprises and of scientific revolution, but we still need great men, their example, what they teach, and the aims they pursue.

Mahatma Gandhi was a man of courage and an Asian through and through. He was venerated as a symbol of the spirit of the East. He was a humanist who stood for the equality of men, nations, races and religions, an internationalist who wished to serve not only the cause of Indian liberty and independence, but also the fraternity of man. Gandhi's role in history was revolutionary. He made a nation out of the despairing, oppressed masses of India who were no longer capable of resistance. He was not alone. The leaders of the Congress Party worked with him, but it was Gandhi who formed the Congress Party into a mass movement.

"There was, in this small and constitutionally weak man, something as hard as steel, something rock-like which did not yield to physical powers. . ."

His example encouraged others to resist tyranny, to act in unity and to be prepared to make sacrifices. To be the father of the

Indian people and the author of national independence is in itself an immense achievement. India has the second largest population in the world, by the year 2,000 every sixth man on earth will be an Indian, and yet the work and example of Gandhi was not confined to his nation. The methods he adopted in the fight for national independence have had a substantial impact on a number of Asian and numerous African political movements and on their leaders; and on Martin Luther King and many leading figures in anti-war movements today. His image has continued to inspire the dramatic struggle waged against hunger since what we need in this fight is not only a more developed technology, a larger quantity of material resources and a higher level of organization, but also a restructuring of conduct, independent action and initiative on the part of hundreds of millions of simple villagers. We have much to learn from him in the fight for peace, disarmament and new kinds of international relationships, since that struggle has to be waged with tools that do not underestimate the power of morality.

The ideas and the political work of Gandhi, and their effect have been praised by many, and strongly criticized by others. A third category had, of necessity, to emerge between those who were his unconditional adherents and those who were his severe critics. Those who respected and even admired him, who considered his influence on

* Address delivered at the Budapest commemorative meeting of the International Gandhi Seminar.

the masses to have been one of the driving forces of the Indian movement for independence and who approved of much that he taught, yet who rejected some of his doctrines which they considered misguided.

Ideas, concepts and rules of conduct which have an impact on mass behaviour cannot be torn apart from their actual historical context. This is important to keep in mind when speaking of Gandhi. He was not a conventional political figure, certainly not in the usual (particularly European) sense; he was a prophet, a teacher of his people, in whose work politics was not separated from morals. He was aware of this. Except early in his career—he never accepted an important political office (e.g. that of the Chairman of the Congress Party). There were times in the history of Europe when politics and economics were thought of as being a part of ethics. On the other hand, not everyone in India agreed with Gandhi on this issue; Tilak, for instance, a gifted mathematician, a man of wide intellectual horizons—who died in August 1920—did not think of politics as a field dominated by ethics. Not to speak of the fact that “pure” political treatises were written in India even earlier than Asoka’s empire, treatises more extensive and more complex than Machiavelli’s work. Machiavelli studied the problems of political management and tactics within the borders of a small Italian principality. He was no authority on ruling over empires that included many nationalities and different cultures. (I would like to remark in parentheses that these reflections on the relationship between politics and ethics as well as between economics and ethics are merely meant to indicate that each sphere of social activity has categories and laws of its own. When it comes to action, these have to be taken into account.)

Gandhi defined, on the one hand, general moral rules governing issues like the individual and justice, self-control, man and the machine as well as problems like peace, democracy and people, poverty and riches,

education and so on, on the other hand, he organized simple political action that was easy to understand by everybody (attacking the salt monopoly, the khadi movement, the movement in support of the untouchables and so on) as part of which men of the lowest social standing joined in large-scale community movements. He was trying to educate the masses to engage in certain activities and to refrain from others. However, he never attempted to fill the gap between general rules and individual action through political programmes. Moral precepts have an impact on human behaviour but do not constitute a firm, coherent system of political objectives in which forces and power relationships, interests, the laws of evolution or historical trends are carefully taken into account. When the concepts and ideas of Gandhi are assessed this consideration has to be invariably kept in mind. In the opposite case not only words of praise or criticism will become one-sided but the essence of his work and the particular nature of the situation in India will not be understood either.

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In the years before Gandhi’s birth millions of poverty-stricken peasants and sepoys rioted. A major part was played in this unrest by the heads of the small feudal states. These riots were ruthlessly suppressed by the British authorities. Isolated peasant uprisings and various forms of individual terroristic acts were, however common also in subsequent periods.

It is obvious that foreign conquest and rule of a country with a large population, of a people with a great past and culture, are apt to produce a national crisis. The essence of this crisis is—as borne out by the example of China—that the people are incapable of understanding the reasons for their humiliating defeat or for the triumph of the other side. (This particularly applies to civilizations as divergent as are the Indian and the British ones, neither of them is able to understand the system of values and rules of

conduct of the other). When the reasons become clear, it is difficult to lay aside the inherited system of values of a national culture and civilization and to accept the conquerors' views on things on which their mastery was based. Japan was, to an extent, capable of doing so but Japan was not turned into a colony, the country was only defeated and humiliated. Japan built a "counter-system" and started four wars within 80 years; in other words, Japan became an aggressive (imperialist) power herself. When a conquered country is unable to discover the secret of success the leading sections of society, landowners and a part of the middle classes, become denationalized and linked to the conqueror in their habits and interests.

That is why Gandhi's ideas and methods which demonstrated the moral superiority of the tormented and humiliated people of India over the conquerors were of such importance.

A very large population, living in extreme poverty had to be set in motion in a country of vast dimensions with a minimum of communication facilities (large numbers of illiterates, absence of an efficient press, officially controlled travel and so on).

*

The fight began at a time when *all* political activities (both conservative and radical) originated from the middle classes and when the industrial working class was barely organized and its influence was limited. The peasantry, constituting more than 80 percent of the population, living in 700,000 villages, was a shapeless mass afflicted by misery, sufferings and famines, exploited by the government, by landowners, by money-lenders, by petty civil servants, by police, lawyers and a priestly caste.

India was divided at the time by a great number of conflicts, of course exploited by the British, conflicts between Hindus and Muslims, conflicts between various nationalities, castes and classes, which rendered united action difficult.

Finally, the situation evolving in the world simultaneously with the independence movement under the leadership of the Congress Party should also be taken into account. In Europe—particularly beginning with the thirties—the Fascist powers were gaining ground. Japan was the ally of the Fascist states of Europe. It should be emphasized that Fascism did not upset the peoples of Asia and Africa to the extent it did the peoples of Europe; racial discrimination, persecution of men on account of their origin, ruthless measures applied in suppressing the opposition were, after all, nothing new for coloured peoples. They had long been the suffering victims of similar systems. On the other hand, the Fascist powers—particularly Italy—did everything to win over Indian leaders. (Mussolini tried to meet Nehru who passed through Rome in 1936. The invitation was very energetically declined by the latter).

The Soviet Union was grappling at that period with the first five-year plans. In 1939 Great Britain after all acted against the continued advance of Fascism in Europe, then in 1941 she became an ally of the Soviet Union. In my view, it was due to the political caution of the Congress Party and to Gandhi's rejection of violence that India was capable of fighting for her independence against British imperialism in such a way that her anti-fascist attitude could never be doubted.

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It is obvious that under the then prevailing conditions the political struggle waged and action in favour of national independence had two aspects, one of these was the *modern* mass movement under the leadership of a political party comprising the best forces of the nation; the other was the *traditional* one which mobilized people by resorting to simple slogans familiar to the illiterate rural masses who were deeply rooted in the Hindu traditions. These two aspects of the political struggle were closely linked.

The dispute concerning non-violence and civil disobedience had been going on ever

since the campaigns were initiated. Gandhi kept on pointing out that he did not teach the world anything new, since truth and non-violence were as old as the hills. In the Gita of the Mahabharata, Krishna expounds the criteria of knowledge, and *non-violence* (ahinsa) is listed—besides humility, perseverance, patience, justice and self-control. There is no doubt, however, that Gandhi was the first to seek to transform the ethics of love from a means of mediation between individuals into an effective social force. Non-violence and civil disobedience were changed, under the conditions of the fight for independence, into a dynamic method, a means of resistance against the tyrant's will. This did not mean an escape but effective opposition.

The method was certainly likely to produce fermentation in society. This conclusion is justified by the participation of many million peasants in action initiated by Gandhi who continued to conduct this activity also in periods when the leaders of the Congress Party were serving terms of imprisonment.

Non-violence (civil disobedience) thus proved effective political tactics.

But it follows from the idealist-moral-religious way of Gandhi's thinking that he did not regard this teaching simply as political tactics. He identified non-violence with kindness and justice. Furthermore he exaggerated the importance of means in relation to objectives. It is certainly true that bad means often make it impossible to attain noble ends. It must also be kept in mind that means are employed before ends can be attained, and so, they often mislead the masses. Nevertheless, the view that means are more important than ends is unacceptable.

*

Gandhi felt and lived the sentiments and mood of the masses better than anybody else. Sometimes he agreed to action despite sporadic violence. He called off action on several occasions, in most instances because he felt that the masses had become tired

or that certain results could be obtained in some other way.

Gandhi conceded that violence was not the principal evil. Cowardice, submission and servitude were worse. "I would rather have India resort to arms in order to defend her honour than that she should in a cowardly manner become or remain a helpless witness to her own dishonour."

A method which could be effectively used under certain conditions was clearly overvalued by Gandhi when he demanded that the future State of India be committed to non-violence. This proposal was rejected by the Congress.

The Gandhi who based himself on traditions was also a radical social reformer. This radicalism linked him to the progressive intellectuals in the leadership of the Congress Party. His radicalism originated in moral philosophy not in politics, what he wanted to accomplish was a moral revolution. As a "moralist revolutionary" he was unsophisticated and Utopian in many respects but he was successful as the originator of mass action. He condemned the exploitation of the masses and expressed the view that political freedom must include economic freedom of the starving millions. He achieved substantial results by action in the interests of the equality of women, against child marriages and for the right of widows to remarry. Action in the interests of the Untouchables which made it possible for the Untouchables to have access to all public institutions, must be deemed particularly successful. This prevented the British government dividing India later into three (instead of two) parts. He was a liberal in the religious sense; he professed the kinship of all religions and looked for what they had in common.

His efforts in trying to reconcile Hindus and Muslims were immeasurable: what he wanted was not bargaining but coming to terms with the Muslims, because this—as he pointed out—depended on the good-will and magnanimity of the majority. He recognized

that the Muslim question was also a social issue, for in several states the small tenants were Muslims, the zamindars (landowners) and bankers were Hindus, while in other states a reversed situation prevailed. At the time when religious strife burst out during the war he tried to come to an agreement with Jinnah, the Muslim leader (1943-1944). He consistently rejected partition which was accepted by Nehru and other Congress leaders, and he devoted his last fast to the cause of a Hindu-Muslim reconciliations. This decided his fate. A few days after finishing his fast he was killed by an extremist Hindu religious leader.

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Among his reform ideas that in favour of local self-government (decentralization), his views on the reform of the education system and his ideas on the relations between individual and community should be emphasized.

As a moralist revolutionary he believed that the sentiments of the rich could be changed, that capital and labour could peacefully cooperate and that social problems could be quickly solved in an independent India on the basis of popular understanding.

Government activity and life in independent India provide convincing proof of the illusory nature of these assumptions and expectations. Government took action, passed laws or issued decrees concerning almost all questions which—in Gandhi's view—ought to have been solved by a moral revolution and by understanding shown by the rich. But social inequalities are greater than Gandhi assumed. Inequalities have increased in many spheres; the constitution provides for the abolition of the caste system, but this provision has not been put into effect in practice; equality of women has been accepted only by the middle classes; the land and tenure reforms have produced no radical changes so far.

I have the highest opinion of the efforts made by Indian leaders in the interest of economic development in the past and pres-

ent. These reflections were merely intended to bring Gandhi's expectations face to face with reality in contemporary India.

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Some of Gandhi's ideas in the socio-economic field are mistaken but still have a certain sound educational effect. What I have in mind is his dislike of modern technology and industry and his bias against towns. It is obviously wrong to think that a country—particularly one with such a high birth-rate—could—without modern industry and technology—do away with poverty and increase the per capita national income tenfold, then twentyfold. It follows therefore that industry is indispensable in India and in every other developing country. Industry, in turn, is not only a productive activity but also one of the regulators of the way of life; wherever there is industry, urbanization will be inevitable even if it is conceded that big cities are not attractive. This is one side, the other is that the application of a traditional technology—particularly in a country like India, with enormous actual and latent surplus manpower—will be needed for a long time to come (for generations). In countries lacking capital it takes a long time to create conditions in which every working individual is employed in jobs at the highest level of technological development. On the other hand, as a result of a fast increase of the population and the fast expansion of industry and small-scale handicrafts a rapid increase in agricultural output is made inevitable. Otherwise India and other developing countries must face famine. Consequently, the weight of agriculture is substantially larger than was assumed in traditional "pro-industry" economic theories. Thus Gandhi, while starting from mistaken conceptions, instinctively discovered real facts and correlations which must never be lost sight of when rational political and economic action is taken.

Gandhi imagined that the recurring gaps in the balance of the economic development

of society could be bridged not only by the constant expansion of production and consumption but also by reducing demand. This notion runs counter to the progress of human society and the economy, still this made sense in India to some extent. No doubt, starting economic growth in a poor, densely populated country with a high birth-rate will demand grave sacrifices. It is likewise obvious that these grave sacrifices are undertaken by the masses when the burdens of economic development are equally shared by all, that is when it is the rich who have to pay in the first place.

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Gandhi, by European standards, was a politician out of the ordinary, this means that the features of prophet, preacher and teacher of morals prevail in him over the operation of political machinery. This should be supplemented by adding that he was not attracted by the role of the politician, who must—in most instances—also be an expert since he has to cope not only with human aims and abilities but also with objective processes and their inherent laws. The prophet and the teacher thinking in terms of moral postulates might proclaim the principle of non-violence and non-compulsion in the new state but a politician cannot accept this. Compulsion, that is the application of some force, cannot be ignored in domestic policy unless there is no need to act *contrary* to the interests of certain social groups and everyone can be made to understand by persuasion the necessity of such actions at the moment when these are taken, although their correctness will only be proved by subsequent events. These courses are inconceivable in a society in which great social tensions have accumulated and where modern and traditional elements have existed side by side for generations. This however does not mean that the warning words of a prophet or teacher of morals are unnecessary. The fact that force or compulsion is necessary does mean that the greater the force or the com-

pulsion, the better. (What I am thinking of is compulsion by force and not by moral persuasion. The latter was accepted by Gandhi. Let me add that moral compulsion is not always easier for an individual to endure than compulsion by force.) In our age when violence has raged to such an extent and in so many different forms it is perhaps not necessary to produce evidence that the application of force has its limitations not only in the moral but also in the rational sense. When excessive violence is resorted to, events will lead to a reverse result, what is achieved in such cases is not the desired result, or else—if this is secured (that is the protection of prestige)—the amount of energy and resources wanted is not in proportion to the aims involved and also produces disequilibrium in other spheres of social life.

For the politician the question arises not in the terms of Gandhi's dilemma namely, whether it is permitted to use force or compulsion under certain circumstances but in the way a certain objective (a set of objectives) can be attained with the minimum of violence (that is, by duly considering, in advance, the social interests an action may come up against and also by using the power of persuasion). The actual answer to the question requires the assessment of the situation and possible alternatives.

I already mentioned that though the interests and activities of Gandhi were not focused on *tactical issues* connected with the operation and balancing of the political machinery, he was a master of tactical flexibility. He was really a figure capable of resolving extremes and opposite poles in himself, in his conduct and actions. His extraordinary tactical flexibility was demonstrated in two ways: on the one hand, he was always capable of forging ahead, if so required by the state (fighting state) of the masses; on the other hand, as a distinguished heir of thousand years old political and diplomatic traditions, he alternated and combined political action and negotiation. To complete the picture it

should be added that he made use of his extraordinary sense of diplomatic tactics against a world power which spread over three continents and which gave a series of diplomats and politicians of no uncommon talent to the world.

A teacher of morals admirably versed in winning over and handling the masses, a diplomat who was able to demonstrate his moral and later his positional advantage over his negotiating partners in ingenious ways, such gifts are seldom found in a single individual.

Gandhi set out to fight starvation in his country. Much concrete action was organized by the Congress Party in the interests of the tenants against zamindars and other feudal elements. The struggle against starvation is carried on in our days with a growing impetus not only in India but all over Africa and Asia. This struggle is now waged by independent nations which are apparently and legally unhampered.

Reality is, however, different. In one part of the world large economic resources are concentrated and the increase of the population is relatively slow. In another part of the world—particularly in Asia—economic resources are extremely limited, and the increase of the population is rapid, almost explosion-like. It should also be taken into account that in these countries illiteracy is great and the scientific capacity which is one of the driving forces of economic expansion is relatively small. It is obvious that a fast increase in food production is an elementary interest of these countries. A sound programme of water conservation, highly productive grain crops, the restoring of the soil's productive capacity (use of chemical fertilizers) and profit-yielding live-stock breeding are needed. These countries must solve these problems by mobilizing their own resources *in the first place*. In addition, a more equal and just distribution of commodities is required, and this demands strong active and purposeful governments because, in the contrary event, inequalities will not be reduced

but increased under the impact of economic evolution. The law of economic life which operates in a spontaneous way is that the rich become richer and the poor poorer.

Only a distribution of income which comes near to the requirements of justice and equality and an economic policy aimed at reducing sharp differences between various areas (states) can give a real impetus to economic expansion and the increase of food production.

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In addition to strongly emphasizing these requirements it should be stressed however that the fight against hunger is the cause not only of the countries concerned but of mankind as a whole!

It should be understood by all that hunger and death from starvation are no less dangers in the contemporary world than the presence of nuclear weapons. There are hundreds of millions living all over the world for whom death from starvation appears to be a real menace while nuclear bombs are a distant danger which is difficult to understand. For this reason, progressive world public opinion must exert great moral and political pressure on the peoples concerned, in order to bring them to cooperate and participate in the fight against starvation.

The principle of non-violence was subjected to criticism in the foregoing; it has also been pointed out that compulsion will always be needed in the lives of states although great care must be taken in its application. But the mobilization of countries and peoples for the fight against hunger should be carried out according to methods like Gandhi's by resorting to a specific amalgamation of persuasion, moral and political pressure. Undisguised force would mean war and war could turn into a nuclear war, which would bring about such a destruction of the available material and intellectual resources as would render living conditions extremely difficult for the survivors. International organizations are called on to organize the fight against hunger, although there is no supreme

power on an international level that could bring about changes without the agreement of states as regards the division of labour and the distribution of commodities. It also follows from this that compulsion in order to have economic activities regrouped on the international level is hardly conceivable, it would be ultimately tantamount to war or to the infringing of the independence of nations.

In this way the fight against hunger leads to better international relations, peace and disarmament. Gandhi specified only moral rules of conduct, on the international level also, he assumed that the rules which govern the activities of people (individuals) and small communities would apply to society as a whole or even to international relations.

But morals and norms of morality are moulded by existing conditions; in other words, the attainment of higher moral conduct is not possible unless international interests, relationships, institutions and mechanisms are transformed. It goes without saying that every simplification must be avoided; *identical* international norms exert their influence in a *most divergent* way on various states; the respective interests, differing value systems and norms of thinking were shaped by differing historical antecedents, traditions and heritages; there are major differences in the internal position and social background of governments. In spite of this, a mutual renouncing of the use of force in inter-governmental relations is an important requirement—particularly in the nuclear age. But Gandhi thought that—and we have been following a similar train of thought in this respect—imperialism would disintegrate when the colonial system collapsed and he did not expect that it would again shift its centre and would evolve new forms and fighting methods. It follows logically that it has become the states' interest to join a security system which provides protection against a potential aggressor. It is thus also obvious that peace-loving countries must be strong and powerful, for weakness

cowardice and submission almost invite the use of force. It may be assumed that certain regional security systems (continental systems) will also be created which might comprise heterogeneous elements. (For instance several systems of alliances.)

When institutional guarantees of peace and security are established, real opportunities will be present for reducing armament expenditure. The expenditure on armaments is higher now than the aggregate annual national income of the countries of the developing world. Therefore, a radical reduction of armament expenditure could bring about a change amounting almost to a turning point in the fight against hunger as well. The way of thinking current in certain circles claiming that international tension is beneficial for the developing countries for in the contrary case there would be no one to provide aid for them, is very superficial. The facts show that international tension contributes primarily to increasing armament expenditure which has reached such astronomical figures that it restricts the material and intellectual resources earmarked for aid, credits and technical cooperation.

When the institutional safeguards of peace and security are elaborated and laid down, what was so attractively said by S. Radhakrishnan should not be forgotten, namely that human genius has produced not only a Buddha and a Gandhi but also a Nero and a Hitler. Let us add that there are social, economic and power conditions which are especially favourable for the growth of Neros and Hitlers.

*

Mahatma Gandhi in his life and work laid the foundations of a new era in the history of India. We, who are friends of an independent and peace-loving India, sincerely hope that this era will surpass the achievements of the ages of Asoka (3rd century B.C.) which was based on Buddhism, and of the Akhbar empire (16th and 17th centuries A.D.) which relied on Islam. Gandhi has, in all respects, advanced and

enriched the great Indian heritage, reflected in both poetry and political writing, the gist of which is the tolerant and understanding existence side by side of different peoples, cultures, languages and religions. His ideas, views and notions differ in many respects from our ideas and system of action. He proved again, however, by his example, that politics without firm ideals, deep conviction and the acceptance of sacrifices is mere tactical trickery and play at balances devoid of real significance. He who had firm convictions could, depending on changes in the situation, always come to terms or seek compromises to continue his journey safely and resolutely in the same spirit and towards the same goals.

At this commemorative meeting, outstanding fighters for peace and personalities with an international reputation are celebrating together with us. They have come to Hungary and to Budapest for the festivities of the International Gandhi Seminar. Representatives of eighteen countries and fighters of different peace movements, of anti-war and pacifist organizations took part in the Seminar. The lectures and discussions testify that Gandhi's name and spirit are

still a banner in the fight for national independence, for peaceful coexistence, for disarmament and against war. And this is so not only because Gandhi has had such a powerful impact on the way of thinking of our friends in India but also because it was through him that we could and can be acquainted with the extremely intricate development problems of poor people, poor in the economic sense of possessing few economic resources.

The roots of Gandhi's humanism may be different from ours but the unprecedented glow of his humanity, self-devotion and moral strength penetrates through the armour of ideological differences, it assists, strengthens and carries forward all of us. The power and attractive force of great personalities who lived fighting and sacrificing their lives for the community lies in the very fact that by bridging the gap between ages, continents, ideas and differing historical situations they make us better and truer. Through their example we can be the architects of better futures for our countries and for mankind and braver and more loyal fighters in the great cause for a more cultured and juster world.

LÁSZLÓ SIKLÓS

TACKLING SHOP FLOOR MORALE

The "Socialist Brigade Movement"

Ten years ago a movement was started in Hungary with the aim of improving people's attitude to their work and interpersonal relationships at their place of work. Since its inception a great many people have joined most of them convinced that their efforts will prove fruitful.

The movement constantly changes. The way everyday life shapes, the desire for a higher income, the rate of industrial devel-

opment, changes in economic policy, the shortage of skilled workers and many other factors all affect it. That is why it tends to show how society has changed and it even to some extent reflects progress.

Management is able to prescribe working hours, the amount workers are expected to produce and the quality of work demanded. But there is no way of regulating the subjective attitude of individuals toward their

Keeping up with a King's clothes

Page 5,
by Sally
Watts

PARTIES don't necessarily have to be such elaborate and costly occasions that they can only be given once in a while, when the hosts are in a state of semi-affluence. Quite the reverse.

And a number of local people, often living in bed-sitters or small flats, organise enterprising parties on a shoestring. Most of these revolve around the "bring a bottle" theme, but with variations.

Perhaps the most inexpensive, yet rewarding method of entertaining has been discovered by members of the groups launched in this area nearly two years ago for men and women who wanted to make more local friends.

For charity

From the start the idea has been that they should meet for coffee evenings in each other's homes, and because not everyone was able to host, it was

REPLENISHING fast-growing children's clothes is a costly business. So it's not surprising that many parents buy their suits for their sons at Michael King's shop in Finchley Road, Temple Fortune—they can take them back for alteration as the boys grow.

The staff includes two tailors working on the premises, who lengthen and let out as required for a minimum charge, and make alterations and adjustments where necessary when you buy.

Another advantage is a made-to-measure service for the larger boy.

Mr. King, who has had his business in Temple

Fortune for 14 years, started selling boys' clothes when his three sons were at school and he found that uniforms were just about the only clothes available. Today his wife is responsible for buying knitwear, and his brother-in-law is one of the tailors.

Customers come from all over the country to buy Barmitzvah and other suits here. Other specialities include short-sleeved cotton sweaters and shirts from the Continent, swim wear, towelling robes, Scandinavian blazers and jackets, and a variety of casual slacks.

This shop caters for boys from five to the later teens, and there's a good selection of shirts with vivid designs for the younger age groups.

Parties on a shoestring

interesting and stimulating conversation is sparked off.

This simple beginning has led to an imaginative variety of parties. One hostess gives a trio of parties with a purpose: a weekly music party, a fortnightly discussion evening, and a monthly poetry and prose party, all with coffee and biscuits.

The musical occasions combine records with individual performances by members who sing or play the piano or guitar.

The discussion groups, held on Sundays, cover many subjects, with religion as the most popular. Speakers at one included a Dominican father, a Buddhist, an Islam and Humanists. Next Sunday's subject will be Is Imagination a Blessing or a Curse?

And at the prose and poetry parties, members

either read their own work or some other which they have enjoyed, and members then discuss it.

These types of parties are attended by anything from 12 to 20 guests, who take turns to help with the washing-up, and making the coffee.

Another variation is a Sunday evening cider and sausages party. The first was so popular that another is being held later this month.

The hostess, who lives in Belsize Park, prepared hot sausage rolls and sausages on sticks for 25 guests, using about 2½ lb. of sausages—pork, beef and chipolotas—and provided four quart bottles of cider;

10.30 and here again the guests helped to wash dishes—and even scoured the pans.

"We may have records of light music as a background next time," says the hostess. "The whole thing is informal and I'm willing to be flexible and hold whatever sort of party people would like."

"I've not felt the inclination to give parties before, but I enjoy these very much—and meeting new people."

Another hostess gives barbecues and variations of the cook-your-own-food party, and a Golders Green member based a coffee and biscuits get-together on the Just A Minute game, a successor to a music-hall sing-song bottle party.

guests and as each brings a bottle, the party-givers provide bread, cheese and coffee and share the cost. And the work.

One says that these informal get-togethers do wonders for a lot of people, who at first creep in timidly, but soon come out of their shell.

A young woman with a small flat in Hampstead recommends a "bring your own filling" party: the host or hostess provides beer, butter and as many different types of bread as possible, and hopes, as she says, that "everyone won't bring Cheddar cheese."

She also suggests a similar occasion in aid of charity, with guests bringing a gift to be sold during the party.

For discussion

A 20-year-old member of the Hampstead bed-sitter brigade has the final word on parties, whether shoe-

Mr.

SHOULD a kitchen be purely functional—a place to escape from as soon as possible? Or should it be beautiful

for information.

Gandhi's great example

AFTER THE WAR two friends and myself started a publishing firm. Our first five books had all been slim volumes of poetry, and although we had been lucky with these—they had all covered their costs and received good notices—we had not made a penny profit.

The expense of running an office, even a one-room affair, was eating into our savings, and it was at the moment when our small capital looked dangerously low that Gandhi's autobiography came our way. It seemed a godsend. We all thought our fortunes were made.

The book was written originally in Lujurati, and when it had first come out in the late 1920s over 50,000 copies had been sold. An English translation had subsequently been prepared, and this in turn had been equally successful in India. But no edition had appeared in the West.

So we wrote off to the publishers in Ahmedabad and offered them an advance of £50, which was all we could scrape up.

I learned afterwards that two large London firms had been willing to advance 20 times that sum, but neither actually had bid because each was under the impression that the other firm had bought the rights.

Anyway, there we were at the beginning of 1948 with our £50 offer accepted and a

The first English edition of Gandhi's autobiography was published 21 years ago this month—by Mr. Neville Braybrooke, who lives in Gardner Road, Hampstead. In this article, he records the events leading up to the book's appearance—and his feelings about it today

potential best-seller on our hands. I was also quite convinced that we had a classic. And I was right about the latter.

The reviews by Kingsley Martin, Margaret Lane and Herbert Read could not have been more enthusiastic. Yet sales were disastrous. We had printed nearly 7,000 copies and only 1,200 had gone within the first year.

We could hold out no longer and we were forced to sell the rest at 1s. The published price had been £1 1s.

If you ask me what went wrong, I would say that sometimes a book can be over-reviewed. People have read so much about it that they do not feel any longer the need to buy it. Or, it could simply be that the time was not ripe. Gandhi's assassination was still fresh in many minds, and the death of a great man frequently leads to a temporary eclipse of his fame.

I was sure, however, that the book was a classic, and a Jonathan Cape reprint of it as a paperback which came

out recently has given me an opportunity to read it yet again. I am more convinced than ever.

THE BOOK carries a subtitle — The Story of my Experiments with Truth. Nor could there be a better summing up. That it stops short by some 20 years before Gandhi's death does not really matter, because full-length autobiography as we know it in the West is a form of literature unknown in India or the East.

The few Indian and Eastern writers that have broken the rule are those who have fallen under Western influence. Gandhi makes his claim clear on the first page: "I simply want to tell the story of my numerous experiments with truth, and as my life consists of nothing but those experiments, it is true that the story will take the shape of an autobiography."

When he began this book in the 1920's half a century of experiments had already shaped his philosophy of living.

... and the story of his story

What his autobiography really offers is a series of confessions which show the making of a saint — or should I say one kind of saint, since no two saints are identical?

MOHANDAS Karamchand Gandhi was not a particularly pious boy. Nor, in his early life, were his ambitions different from those of any other normal Indian student at the time.

When he arrived in Paris for the first time, he visited the Eiffel Tower and, on one occasion allowed himself the extravagance of lunching in its restaurant.

In England he took dancing lessons, bought himself a top hat from the Army & Navy Stores, and learned the art of living daily on a budget of less than two shillings. This was in the 1880s. At the same period too, some English friends told him how shocked they were when he admitted that he had never read the Bhagavad Gita.

"But once I begun . . . I could not leave off," he recalls.

In an English boarding-house a fellow lodger introduced him to the Bible. The Old Testament — particularly the Book of Numbers — he found tedious, but the New Testament — especially the Sermon on the Mount — went straight to his heart.

Indeed, Gandhi's triumph was to bring the law of the New Testament to bear on politics everywhere. In restoring human dignity to the Untouchables in his own country, or in demanding rights for the indentured Indian labourers in South

Africa, his experiments were largely a putting into action the truths to be found in the Sermon on the Mount.

His philosophy of satyagraha — by which he meant the use of truth-force as opposed to brute-force — was, in effect, a plea to put into practice the beatitude about the peacemakers.

WHEN you read the confessions of such a man, it is easy to pick holes, to single out his puritan view of sex, or to point out the excessive guilt he felt about stealing a few annas. St. Augustine's Confessions could be faulted in the same way.

But to allow the self-reproaching moans of either writer to drown the great cries of love and affirmation that resound through their books is to get the balance wrong.

After all, it is precisely these self-reproaches which show that both men were subject to the same weaknesses and feelings of guilt as the rest of mankind. But if such reminders of their human frailties help to bring them down to earth, their autobiographies also reveal to what great heights the human spirit can rise in search of what the Hindu calls Moksha, the Christian salvation.

"The heart of man is restless until it finds rest in Thee," cried St. Augustine. "All I have been striving and pining to achieve is . . . to see God face to face," wrote Gandhi.

Fifteen centuries divide their confessions, but the same search for truth unites their authors and gives to both their books the mark of a spiritual classic.

WHAT CAN

for Dickie
Ablenborough efforts

for all
so long!

Love
Pat Poole

Non-Violence or Non-Existence

Non-Violence or Non-Existence

Satish Kumar

introduces

the Gandhian ideology of
a non-violent society

Christian Action, London

To Canon L. John Collins whose kind
insistence compelled me to write this book

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President of Christian Action
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I am very grateful to Christian Action who invited me for a lecture tour around Britain.

During this tour the questions I have dealt with in this book were raised.

I am greatly indebted to Mr. John Mountjoy who accompanied me on the lecture tour and who has advised me on the planning of the book. I am also very grateful to Miss Rosalind Schama who helped me with the editing.

S.K.

Introduction

All over the world people are turning to violence. There is, you will say, nothing very new in that, and you will, of course, be right. But there is, I think, something new and disturbing in the fact that to-day, particularly among the young, social democrats, progressive liberals, intellectual visionaries and idealists of every kind have begun to despair of peaceful change in human affairs and are turning to violence as the only alternative.

There are, thank God, exceptions to this trend. Martin Luther King dedicated his life to the task of trying to prove that non-violent methods in the political struggle are not only morally preferable but in the long run more effective. And his assassination last year was not the end of his work. Martin Luther King acknowledged his debt to Mahatma Gandhi and there are in India and elsewhere many disciples of the Mahatma trying to communicate his message of non-violence and social change through Love.

One of these is Satish Kumar who has written this little book. Satish Kumar is no compromising middle-of-the-road man. He would call himself with pride a revolutionary; but he sees his kind of revolution—Gandhi's and Martin Luther King's kind—as a much more profound, much more radical plan for social change because it can change human beings as well as social institutions. In this book an imaginary dialogue has been recorded. A represents a revolutionary—perhaps a young man—who has become disillusioned with

peaceful protest and is turning more and more to violence as a solution. **B** is the voice of Gandhi's disciple who seeks to convince **A** that non-violence can be and is, if understood properly, the most effective political force in the world. I leave you to study the dialogue and hope it may serve to enrich your own appreciation of the situation in which mankind finds itself at this time in history.

L. John Collins

Revolution

- A Before we talk about the philosophy of a non-violent society we should define our terms and question our assumptions. For example, you constantly refer to yourself as a revolutionary, you insist on the need for total revolution. What do you mean by 'revolution'?
- B Revolution implies violence, bloodshed and killing to most people. But in my context it means change—not superficial change but basic, overall change. I use the word 'revolution' because it is more significant than change. In the light of the present dramatic society in which we live I prefer it because what I am suggesting is a complete and absolute change in personal attitude, personal approach, social values, and political and economic conditions. Revolution is not an absolute term. It is not like an apple hanging on a tree which one goes and picks. It is a continuous, permanent process in life which never ends. And since we are defining terms, when I use the term 'reactionary' I mean someone of any class, of any race, who does not recognise this unalterable fact.

Today we need drastic and speedy change. I cannot emphasise too strongly the vital importance of the word 'speedy'. There are millions of good and kindly people who talk of change in 'God's good time'. For those of us who are not afraid to call ourselves revolutionaries, God's good time is now. One difficulty is that we are weighed down by certain centuries-old traditions which have conditioned our minds, making us prejudiced

traditionalists. Therefore we need a revolution to build an alternative society which meets the needs and fulfils the aspirations of the present age.

- A To achieve this you must use violence, surely, because the Establishment is armed and violent as you will quickly appreciate when you try to make drastic changes. Our violent society will suppress you if your revolution looks like being successful.
- B The strategy of a non-violent revolution is not started by direct confrontation with the ruling economic and political people but by winning the confidence and practical support of the masses to refuse co-operation. We cut the ground from underneath their feet. We make them irrelevant. Also we create the situations in which they cannot use arms. The Establishment is only able to tick when it has the day-to-day backing of the people. It is not an entity on its own. When the people withdraw their support the Establishment collapses, because it no longer has a foundation. I agree that at some point direct confrontation must come. But before this, we who are organising the non-violent revolution must plan an extensive campaign to educate the masses, in its strategy, techniques, ideology and action.

You, yourself, have said that the Establishment maintains itself by force, or the implications of its power, so to attempt a violent revolution will only recoil violently upon the revolutionaries, and all is lost.

The Establishment will always beat the rebels when it comes to violence. Everything is on their side, because they control the strongest means of committing violence, for example, nuclear bombs, the mass media, the industrial complex. Non-violent struggle has a much better chance of avoiding suppression and organising itself.

Violence has become so violent that it has

defeated its own purpose. Minor acts of violence snowball, to become civil, and eventually nuclear, war. Once war has started it is very hard to stop it. Just look at Vietnam. For the past 30 years—and more if you read history—people have been caught up in mass murder, promoted, encouraged and blessed to solve some important problem. And look where we are now. Military victory is impossible in the nuclear age.

A But some violent revolutions have not only been necessary, they have also been successful. A doctor doesn't only prescribe sleeping draughts and a week off from work. Take the Soviet Union.

B A change achieved by violence must, alas, be maintained by violence. Has the Soviet Union achieved what its first leaders set out to do? Is its society socialist or communist? The occupation of Czechoslovakia proves that Soviet socialism is another brand of imperialism. Professor Herbert Marcuse, Marxist thinker, contends that he doesn't see in any of the Soviet-model Socialist countries any of the great original ideas of socialism translated into reality.

Violence has been proved unsuccessful. It is an old-fashioned, outdated and impractical method. We must look for new techniques for a responsible, sensible, human and up-to-date revolution. I can see ahead to the revolution of the 21st century, which should and can occur, and which would not be fought with the weapons of Vietnam and Nigeria. Our weapons must be weapons of the mind and the weapon of non-cooperation. The modern revolution must be constructive, not destructive. Take the example of Che Guevara's tactics. When he was killed his revolution died with him. Violence never succeeds.

A Before we go on, please define this magic potion you call non-violence? I call it that

because your talking reminds me of a commercial which prescribes a certain product as the be-all and end-all answer to a people's problems—from love to constipation.

- B Non-violence isn't a nicely packed solution with a Green Stamps gift for every problem confronting every person. There is no easy answer to personal, civic and national problems.

Non-violence is not silence. Non-violence is not non-resistance. Non-violence is not passivity. It is positive action. It is a force superior to all the other forces put together. As Gandhi said: *Non-violence in life exercises a force superior to all the forces of brutality. There is a difference between non-violence and traditional pacifism. A pacifist would say 'no' to war. This is not enough. We must say 'yes' to something. We must analyse why wars take place. Because the structure of society is a war-making structure thus it is a war-making society. Hence, non-violence, is concerned with creating an alternative society. In non-violence, to resist and overcome the evil through love is the first principle. Resist evil. That is the first imperative. Resist with non-violence. That is the right way. But if you cannot resist evil with non-violence then resist it with violence, even. But without ill-will. Do not surrender, do not submit to evil. Non-violence is a weapon of courage. It belongs only to a strong, fearless man. It is easier to be violent than non-violent.*

- A Did I hear you aright? Violence is worthwhile, you say, in certain circumstances!

- B I am not having it both ways. I am not saying that violence is commendable. All I said was that if you should have to choose between surrender and violence then choosing surrender is greater violence because non-violence is a message of liberation and freedom.

Violence is immoral and impractical. Non-

violence isn't confined to the New Testament. It is the answer to the challenge of the nuclear age. Nuclear weapons make it quite clear. We have no choice. It is Non-violence or Non-existence. Violence is a flop.

- A What you are saying is all very well, but the efforts of non-violent folk don't come to the notice of the people as a whole, whereas the violence of the Paris students, for instance, brings grievances and injustices immediately to the attention of those responsible for them.
- B What is the criterion of success? If you measure it by the newspaper and TV coverage then success has been won. But real success of revolution goes much deeper than that. My kind of success comes from creating a consciousness of one's rights and responsibilities, and furthermore, in encouraging action to defend one's rights and carry out one's responsibilities. Revolutionaries, for their part, must also win the respect, admiration and confidence of the masses for whom they are working. If these are the criteria of success, then I argue that both Gandhi and Martin Luther King were successful revolutionaries.

The outcome of the Paris students' violent revolt was that President de Gaulle and the right-wing reactionaries won the day. The French people gave more power to the President. The cause and aims of the Paris students were just and reasonable. Some of their protests were non-violent. If they had persisted with non-violent planning their victory would have been assured.

They had the backing of millions of workers, disposed to help, provided the students didn't wreck the nation in order to solve their own particular grievances. The workers proved their sympathy by their non-violent non-cooperation with the Establishment, but turned back when they saw the chaos that had been caused.

A I think you have a case when we are talking about democratic countries with, at least, a vestige of freedom, but what about South Africa and Rhodesia, where the Establishment is oppressive and stifles, if not throttles, opposition?

B When planning the overthrow of the unjust systems and equally unjust governments in these countries one must attack them at their weakest points. No government is invincible. The determination and resolution of the revolutionaries, allied to intelligent strategy will win. If we can achieve a non-violent social order in countries like, in the East, India and, in the West, Great Britain, we would have a tremendous force in the common cause of human freedom. I choose these particular countries because, having travelled in 25 countries, I believe that the people of India and Great Britain are orientated towards a non-violent society.

We must organise an international army of liberation in solidarity with the non-violent movements in South Africa and Rhodesia. If such an army of, say, 25,000 liberators, converges on these countries, this will create a local and universal impact and give solace and strength to the freedom and peace workers living imprisoned within these veritable fortresses. The suggestion of such a liberation army should destroy, in no uncertain terms, the notion that the non-violence movement is a place for the waverers, the half-hearted, or the fearful. I repeat again and again that non-violence demands resolution and bravery. The cautious, the timid, however well-meaning, can find no harbour within it.

A What persuades you to think that your liberation army could and would achieve what Western powers have failed to do?

B I am convinced that white men's feelings for others are not extinct. They are infected by

prejudice or dormant. Faced by an army of men and women who come to them without hatred or ill-will and not to kill, but rather, ready to be killed if the occasion arises, their feelings will respond. Should governments order the slaughter of the non-violent forces, their armies, and police, mostly coloured people, will find themselves confronted by an army which refuses to retaliate, and they might well decide in these circumstances not to follow their governments' orders. Only through the total non-cooperation of coloured Africans will racist regimes be rendered impotent.

This is a practical alternative to speech-making and bomb-throwing politics. If we want to achieve good ends we must use good means.

- A Your thinking, your talking, your theorising seems impractical. I respect and like its idealism. I challenge its practicality.
- B If non-violence is impractical, then what is practical? The atom bomb? War-murder? Whatever is in the interests of truth and humanity we must *make* practical. The path of violent revolution is like taking an aspirin. It gives, not takes away, a headache. We call ourselves very civilised, but when we think of the many, many current conflicts—in Nigeria, Vietnam, Czechoslovakia, I think we are still using the pre-historic methods of the Cave Age.

The conventional political ways considered most practical have fallen flat on their twisted faces. They split people into parties, and then into factions and more factions. People are categorised. They become left, right; black, white; east and west; communist and capitalist; Catholic and Protestant; Hindu and Muslim. The responsibility of non-violent revolutionaries is to unite the world on the basis of scientific and spiritual thinking. Your so-called practicalism is at stake—not my idealism.

because many things will have to be individual in the process of becoming a non-violent

A Forever conscious of the many sores in our society, I am dubious of the easy way out you suggest. You gaily by-pass the imperfections of human beings who make up society. Why should sinners become saints overnight through the transformation of capitalist Britain into non-violent Britain?

NOT overcautious

B You obviously suffer from a very poor opinion of the resistance of human beings. No human being is born a sinner; neither is he born a saint. But we have an enormous potential to develop either way. If they are afforded a proper upbringing (proper standards, proper values, proper environment and so on) this opens the door wide to their personal and social advancement.

Today, mass media, education, politics and other means of communication are pushing human beings into a perpetual state of suspicion, mistrust and fear. Each nation spends a high percentage of its budget in training young people how to kill in the armed forces. Is any part of the budget allocated to training people how to love? The forces of violence are highly organised, whereas the forces of non-violence (another word for love) are sparse and unorganized. You cannot blame human nature alone for this. I have never said, nor do I think, that human nature is perfect. It is a mixture of good and bad. The ultimate excellence of a non-violent society must depend on the individual. Of that I am fully aware. Don't look so depressed. It may never happen. There are a lot of good people in the world. If we strive hard enough we can reach near-perfection. Surely it is this conviction and ideal which impels and sustains the revolutionary?

A What immediate reasons impel you to be a non-violent revolutionary?

B The breakdown of this industrial civilisation is the foremost reason. We have only to note

that 11,000 murders are committed in the U.S. every year and that ten million patients occupy the mental hospitals. Its failure is demonstrated in the unrest and dissatisfaction of young people. When I talk to university students they invariably tell me about their feelings of futility and their opposition to the high and complicated standard of living. They are beginning to realise that this sort of richness in a money-orientated society does not solve personal problems. They are willing to go back to a simple human life. Mass urbanisation and big-scale organisation is killing their human relationships. As Herbert Marcuse has explained so lucidly, in a modern technical society so-called free institutions and democratic liberties are used to limit freedom, repress individuality, disguise exploitation and restrict the scope of human experience. Society is controlled through the manipulation of false needs created by vested interests. This creates a new totalitarianism. Similarly, in the so-called underdeveloped countries we see exploitation, inequality, and competition among unequally equipped economic groups. The result is poverty, hunger and ignorance. These are my immediate reasons.

A You aren't the first person to discover what you have told me. But we don't need a revolution to put things right. We have a parliamentary democracy where things move as fast or slow as the electorate wants. If they choose bingo instead of Mr. Wilson or Mr. Heath or their local equivalent, then matters and conditions will stay put.

B Radical change will never come through parliamentary democracy. Benefits, of course, but fundamental change, no. No one sentences himself to death. Why should Parliament?

A non-violent society will discard the centralization and concentration of power in the few hands sometimes called Government. It will substitute a people's power instead. This is a

process of dissolving power. If there is a parliament in a non-violent society its role will be not to rule but to co-ordinate and communicate between the people.

The Labour Party has failed to put into practice what its members so glibly promised in speeches, the party's manifesto and detailed programmes. As Arnold Toynbee, expressing his dissatisfaction with your prize parliamentary system, said: *Mankind today is acutely dissatisfied with the institutions through which it is trying to manage its affairs. We are demonstrating our discontent in a world-wide surge of upheavals. This is not surprising, for the institutions against which they are directed are antique. They date. Parliaments are a peculiar 13th century English institution.* I agree with every word.

That doesn't mean that I am against parliament, or rather the idea behind parliamentary democracy. I want to change the system and make the parliamentary end of it useful and constructive rather than a phoney wrestling ring. The safeguarding of the liberties, welfare and interests of the people will never be effective until we have rebuilt parliamentary democracy on the firm structure of a non-violent society. We shall turn things upside-down, so that people will have a reason to live, which means they will at least have some say in how they will live.

You see, I think your system is top-heavy. The people have lost direct participation in the decision which dictate their lives. In my society maximum power will be at the bottom, not the top—like a pyramid. I want people neither to categorize nor to institutionalize themselves into parties but to think of themselves as members of the community. This is the only way to self-government and direct democratic participation. In fact, 'self government' is the pre-requisite for self-government.

The size of communities should be between

*local level
have shared
be school
Councils
- both primary and secondary
freedom
community
relation*

500 and 1,000 families. To ensure coordination between communities there can be district councils and county councils, but again, these bodies will have minimal power. If we can build this sort of structure, then the Prime Minister's worries will be negligible. He will be healthier and happier, for he will find that people can really take care of themselves, if they are only given the chance.

- A All this sounds to me like Satish in Wonderland. There will be even more talking and talking and talking. Have you ever been to a local borough council meeting? You'd end up a Fascist. But granted you've broken up your conurbations—and that takes some swallowing—how do you propose to decentralize the economic structure it has taken so long to create? You won't only meet opposition from rich capitalists, but rich workers too. There are quite a lot, you know.
- B The non-violent economic order rejects the violence inherent in the present capitalist economic system, expressed through profit-making, through private enterprise, state capitalism, or state-controlled socialism. Capitalism, as I see it, is against society, while state socialism is against the individual. We aspire to effect a synthesis between individual and society. This synthesis is only possible when society is organised on a small scale. The question of 'size' is important in a non-violent society. Non-violence cannot be competitive; it can only be cooperative. The ownership of the means of production will rest with the community. There will be neither private nor state ownership. The weakest member of the community should be given first consideration in a non-violent economy. This means we want to evolve an economy of service and not of profit. This demands individual selflessness—not selfishness.
- You laugh at my wonderland. Indeed you are unintentionally right. It is a real livable,

attainable wonderland. There are already many experiments approaching my ideal. Work at Notting Hill by George Clark or in East London by Richard Hauser, at the Iona Community in Scotland, the Simon Community factories for peace in Glasgow, the *Involve* movement, the Scott-Bader, Commonwealth in Wellingborough, the Fourth World movement of John Papworth are some examples. What we need is to evolve a mass movement and give a big push to our programme.

A And there are many more. Many, many citizens—far more than most people realise—are serving their fellowmen in all sorts of ways. All these are voluntary groups. They do it because they love, like Gandhi did. I think we are well on our way to the sort of society you are describing. Give us time. Change doesn't happen overnight—it won't, even in your society.

B Yes, but these selfless citizens are reformers not revolutionaries. Gandhi linked reform with revolution. So did Martin Luther King. The reformers think and act in terms of one part of the body, so to speak, whereas we are diagnosing for and healing the whole person. They are working in isolation without a clear vision of the total society. We see a total man in a total society. Therefore we must have total revolution.

A How are you going to bring this about?

B We start at the bottom—not the top. Violent revolution seizes power and imposes its rule upon the people. Non-violent revolution can only be brought about by setting examples and persuading people to effect the necessary and radical changes.

Describing Gandhi's approach, Geoffrey Ashe writes that Gandhi meant his popularized Congress to be a 'state within a state', a

citadel of dissent against the wrongful regime. Under its aegis, a transformed self-reliant society would take shape. Regenerated Indians would set up their own schools, their own courts, their own cottage industries, their own police. As they became less and less dependent on the regime, they could cut down their cooperation further and further. The British Establishment in India would be forced to live with a counter-establishment—not aggressive,—not vengeful, but simply growing. Sooner or later, the beam would tip. The Establishment would recognise that its power had vanished and make amends. This is how we are going to bring about a self-reliant non-violent society's bottom-up revolution. Our revolutionaries must act according to what they think and feel. There is no point in talking hypocritically about the good life and not acting accordingly. If they all act this way, it automatically makes for non-cooperation with the existing Establishment. The method is to practise these precepts oneself and then try to form a network of similarly-minded people living in communities where more human relationships and a simple life exist.

- A So what you intend to achieve is a 'do-it-yourself' society!
- B Yes. The non-violent society is based on love, on the 'good of all'. We disagree with oppression and conflict. Hence, we believe in the freedom of workers from exploitation by big business, the freedom of women from men's tyranny, justice for depressed classes, no religious feuding and intolerance, and so forth.

Non-violence is an attitude of mind and a way of revolutionary life. Protest, dissent and demonstrations are alright, but at the same time we must be affirmative and creative. Just to think up political demands, lobby M.Ps. and march to No. 10 is not sufficient. This is only one per cent of the total picture. The real

job to hand is to build a counter-society, a distinct mode of living on, as you say, a 'do-it-yourself' basis.

A Do you realise that non-violence has been rejected by university students, the *avant garde* of the coming revolution?

B The fact stated in your question is untrue. My wide experience confirms that most students are still searching for a human, as well as a dynamic, way to the revolution.

The reason why some students have lost their faith in non-violence is that the term 'non-violence' is sometimes misused by those who possess the greatest instruments of violence. It is wrong and illogical thinking when President de Gaulle or President Johnson asks students to be quiet and non-violent when they themselves are the champions of violence and control direct weapons of mass murder. Also the term 'non-violence' is misused by inactivists who talk, and sometimes even shout with fervour, from the restrictions of a comfortable armchair in an attractively decorated drawing-room. For a long time non-violence has been restricted to a personal code of conduct without it being applied to human conflict and the solution of social problems. If we prove that non-violence is an effective weapon to use against injustice and a creative medium to construct a just society, I am confident that students everywhere will overwhelmingly support non-violence.

And if a non-violent movement provides an educational programme for cleaner concepts and clear demarcation between protest and violence, dissent and disruption, participation and anarchy, then students will regain their faith and the support I predict will be lasting. We must understand that students' unrest is spawned by good 'real-life' reasons. They aren't rebellious, impetuous youths having their fling. As Professor Julius Gould rightly

analyses it: *Students rebel against mechanization and technology, against bureaucratic society and impersonal human relations. They rebel because the universities have become bureaucratized. They are sausage machines for processing intellectual masses through their crowded facilities. Students' polemic is with institutions and authority, as such, not just against specific remediable evils.*

In this situation which he has outlined we really cannot blame students. Our non-violent society will provide ample outlets for their aspirations in every sphere of life.

- A Your approach to a new living is very naive in some instances. To condemn Presidents Johnson and de Gaulle because they 'possess' arms is almost the same as accusing a policeman of wanting violence because he carries a truncheon. To keep the peace, the threat, if you like, of armed protection or intervention, if you prefer, is absolutely essential.
- B You cannot fight fire with fire. You must use water. At some point in time we must get rid of the heavy monetary incumbrance of a military budget. Almost every moment sees someone somewhere dying of starvation. What right have we to waste our human resources on weapons of destruction? How stupid it is that we are committing suicide in order to live! The U.S. and the U.S.S.R. can destroy the world 45 times. And yet we still worry, fret and spend more money—for what? Who dares say that non-violence is impractical? The political leaders cause fear and animosity against other people across the borders, while, of course, the leaders of those people are telling them exactly the same thing. Fear breeds fear. When I crossed India's border into Pakistan during my two-and-a-half year's peace march around the world some of my Indian friends brought me food parcels. They thought that no one in Pakistan would receive

me and give me food and lodging for the night. How wrong they were! Not long after we'd crossed we met a young man who'd driven 16 miles to meet us (a friend had joined me on this march). He invited us to travel with him and stay the night! This stranger who'd only read about us wasn't our enemy. He was our friend, and the warmth of feeling behind his pressing invitation was such that he offered to take our baggage home in his car to make sure we'd avail ourselves of his hospitality later on. I stayed a month in Pakistan and never met enmity. From time to time the leaders made some anti-Indian speeches. Similarly when I was in the Soviet Union the common people told me that they wanted peace and hoped we would tell their American counterparts. The same went for the Americans. They wanted peace, too. But they wanted us to tell the Soviet people. Each thought they were peacelovers. It is, as always, the other chap who wants war. In fact, the enemy is not Pakistani, Muslim, Capitalist, Communist, Russian or American. The real enemy is fear and mistrust. This is within us. And we've got to get rid of it.

Self Government

A Your grass roots—a phrase you like and constantly use—are in India. What living evidence is there to prove that what you've said actually ticks there. For all Gandhi's example in word and deed this 553 million peopled nation still hasn't taken him to heart. In other words they aren't practising what he preached. Why should we?

B Your reasoning is as out of tune as my village school piano. Truth isn't dependent on voting or support. It so happens that increasing numbers of Indians under Vinoba Bhave's leadership are accepting in practice what Gandhi taught, though that of itself suggests but does not prove. In any case, Gandhi was a universalist. He wasn't India's property.

When India was celebrating her first Independence Day, Gandhi did not take part in the festival. He was working in the remote villages. He walked and talked his message. He said that mere shift of power from British to Indian rule was only the first step on the long journey of liberation and freedom. *It makes no difference who is sitting on my shoulder if the system is basically the same. The real success of my non-violence will come only when Indian masses are liberated from all kinds of economic and political oppression, exploitation, and rule.* Unfortunately he was murdered before he was able to put his plans into practice.

He had asked the Congress Party to dissolve itself. He didn't want to see it as an election-orientated political party seeking power, office,

and careers. He wanted it to expend all its energies in the task of non-violent revolution. He foresaw a liberation army of 600,000 soldiers, each one of whom would adopt a village and see it through on the road to revolution. After Gandhi's death, Vinoba tried, and is still trying, to fulfil this task of an Indian revolution with his 12,000 peace guerrillas (Shanti Sena). I am one of them.

A How did you become a non-violent soldier—if you see my point?

B When I was nine years old I was made a monk. For nine years I lived a contemplative life, praying, meditating, preaching, studying, reading and doing what my holy guru (teacher) said was turning my back on the world and turning my face towards God. I might well be a Jain monk now but for one of the monastery's supporters, who gave me a book by Gandhi, in which he described a new form of community living based on spirituality and human relationship. His thesis so impressed me that I forsook my life to join the Mahatma's successor Vinoba Bhave, often called 'the Saint on the march'.

In one village I worked for two years. In the beginning there was no unity, no purpose, no community feeling in the village. The land was rich in soil but the landlord was satisfied with its output.

He didn't want more production because as long as it satisfied his needs that was good enough. He wasn't worried about other people. The landless people themselves didn't want to produce any more because the fruits of their labour would only go to the landlord; they would get nothing. Such is India's grave problem. There is no interest and no unity. Vinoba said to these people that neither American nor British aid nor Mrs. Gandhi could give prosperity to villagers; only through the unity of the community could they find a new, worthwhile life.

Vinoba also said that villages still continued to be dependent on cities, government, and foreign aid. "What are the consequences of an independent country of dependent villages?" he asked. We must build a movement of village power and make each and every village a self-reliant 'village republic'. I was moved by the sense of what he said and gave my whole time and energy to this Gandhian movement of village republics (*Gramdan*) which is engaged in the process of revolution. The landlord and the landless people of that village were persuaded to form a non-violent commune. Every person in the village signed the following pledge: *The aim of our commune will be to make an effort to plan and carry out in our villages on the basis of collective decisions, to give priority to our weaker fellow villagers in the programme of development, to refrain from doing injustice and following the wrong policies and to make the village the place where the labourer and the landlord and the money-lender together make an effort to evolve a peaceful happy family of equal members. Thus we shall establish a self-government in our village. The ownership of the land and the means of production rest not in private hands but in the village assembly. This is formed by one member of each village family. All decisions are taken by unanimous vote.*

After two years in my village the production went up five fold. The villagers improved their working implements, and I saw a peaceful revolution taking place in the life of the village. That the landlords had agreed to renounce their ownership without any compensation was indeed drastic change.

- A Can this happen in every Indian village?
- B Yes. This is a search for a new technique. Gandhi presented a new dimension to the world in the successful use of the power of non-violence. We believe that violent revo-

lution ends in a turmoil of reactionary and revisionist forces. I can see many of the achievements of the Chinese revolution, but we must effect even greater improvement in our technique. In China the concentration of power in a few hands still exists. Our experiment is to put socialism and individual freedom together. I am sure that in a few years' time it will be possible to bring all India within the framework of this revolution. At present we have 100,000 villages transformed into such communes. About 70 million people are living there. This is a promising start. Ultimately India should be liberated from the plague of industrialism, from the centralization of power and economy, from the large-scale organization of industry and business. It is worth noting that in these 100,000 village republics there is no private ownership of land and the village assemblies make all planning decisions as regards agriculture, education, health services, etc. They even form a village bank, a village cooperative store and a village court, where disputes are arbitrated. In this way they recast the entire village structure by transforming it from a feudal capitalist society into a non-violent, cooperative, communal society.

A Would you say that this is an Indian approach to bring about a peasant revolution ?

B Right.

A In what way does it differ from the way of Mao in China ?

B I must say that Mao of China has also understood the potentialities of a peasant revolution in its proper perspective. The difference between Gandhi and Mao is that Gandhi insisted on change of heart by democratic persuasion and moral pressure. He believed that freedom is what you start with and not what you arrive at. Revolution has to be by everybody and for everybody ; otherwise it is just another kind of fascism. Historically, there is an elementary

lesson to be learned from all attempts to impose revolution on the people. Therefore Gandhi tried to bring this revolution about through planned democracy and reconstruction of individual social values. He was a socialist with a mixture of the spiritual. Therefore, it was an Indian-style socialism. To Gandhi, all members of society were equal, none low and none high. In the individual body the head is not high because it is the top of the body, nor are the soles of the feet low because they touch the earth. Even as the members of an individual body are equal, so are the members of society. In society the prince and the peasant, the wealthy and the poor, the employer and the employee are all on the same level. There is no duality in socialism; it is all unity.

In order to reach this state we must not look at things philosophically and say that we need not make a move until all are agreed on socialism. Without changing our lives, we can go on making speeches, forming parties. This is not socialism. Socialism begins with the first convert. If there is one such, zeros can be added to the one, and the first zero will account for 10, and every addition will account for 10 times the previous number.

If the beginner is a zero, no one makes a beginning. Multiplicity by zeros will also produce zero value.

Gandhi's socialism is as pure as crystal. It therefore, requires crystal-like means to achieve it. Impure means result in an impure end. The prince and the peasant will not be rendered equal by cutting off the prince's head. One cannot reach truth by untruthfulness. This spiritual and religious approach of Gandhi puts him on an entirely different level from Mao Tse Tung.

- A You were talking about this kind of spiritual Indian-style socialism being tried in your

village revolutions. Do you issue a blueprint for the management of village councils?

- B No. Our movement gives only an ideological lead; we do not believe in guides and blueprints. One of the spokesmen of the movement, Mr. Gora, says that each village republic should evolve its own mould of management according to its genius and opportunities.

The day-to-day work of village republics should be left to the people who will use their experience and foresight to manage their affairs by trial and error. The main guiding principles of all their activities are the proper utilisation of their men and materials and the adequate provision of freedom and food for the people.

It is a habit with the men in power in capitalist democracies and socialist dictatorships to assume that they alone are capable of thinking and the rest are not. They issue blueprints for bits and pieces and make grandiose plans for the whole country. This habit prevents the common man from learning the art of bold and deliberate living. Man's freedom-loving spirit rebels against dictation, so that sporadic uprisings of the people upset the plans, and the peace as well. The framework of any plan should be formulated and accepted by all the people concerned. When the Indian Government drew up five year plans, it was found that without a direct relationship between plan and people nothing of value could be achieved. Therefore we believe that the people should not be ruled; they are in fact the rulers.

- A From your description I understand that power does not belong to the centre, to the government, from which it is delegated to local units. Rather it is a case of all power being vested in the people at the bottom, who delegate a certain part of their power to the centre.

- B You are right.

A In this case, you must allow for some kind of opposition, even within your bottom-heavy democracy—and there the ' party ' comes in.

B No. We want to avoid any sort of structure which would divide people into factions. The contemporary form of communal class or caste prejudice is created by political parties. This system has all the defects of sectarianism and fanaticism bred by the clan, the caste and the religion in the past. Political parties subsist on the ignorance of the common man about his relationship with government. A party functions as a middle-man between the common man and his power-ridden government. Every political party believes that it can serve the people best when it gets power, so even an honest political party gives top priority to capturing power. For it, power comes first and the people next.

It is not only Gandhi, Vinoba Bhave and other Eastern thinkers who have exposed politics as an outworn and inadequate system. The students' movement and extra-parliamentary opposition developing in Europe, suggest the same approach. As Jo Grimond says: *Politics in Britain is not about Socialists versus Conservatives or Liberals, but about government versus the governed.* If parties distort politics, why not abolish parties? What has made adequate reform so difficult in the Western World is that the framework of politics has become rigid. Even Liberal, Social-Democrat and Communist parties become bureaucratic and conservative. The revolution which began in 1789 is grinding to a halt in the West. It cannot gain any fresh impetus within the party political system. Is not Socialism in its present form one of the greatest obstacles to progress? It is failing to keep alive revolt; it is failing the working people; it is drained of moral content and is becoming more and more bureaucratic.

The essence of the new Left revolt is against

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bureaucracy and the bureaucratic acceptance of apparently irresistible scientific advances wherein the masses have no say. It is a revolt against the view that a human being is merely a bundle of roles which he plays out according to his position in various organisations.

In the self-government of Indian village republics the emphasis is laid on the exclusion of these contemporary evils.

- A You are swimming against the stream. I cannot see how you can stop people getting attracted towards urban-mindedness. I see all over the world population flowing from small villages and the countryside to big cities and industrial areas. Attraction toward the machine and city life is strong.
- B In fact, we are trying to keep a balance between attraction towards the machine and attraction towards the human element. In the *Gramdan* village we start by strengthening the social consciousness of a community and developing its collective will. Secondly, we create community determination. We develop the power of the people as a whole. A power that can disperse the mist of inertia is the aim. This leads to a new concept of people's polity which we call *Loka Niti*. These are the bases for a self-governing, self-reliant, agro-industrial and arbo-rural community. Under our system, aspirations towards higher standards of living are not permitted to increase the level of certain sections of society while others lag behind. This is an attempt to prevent uneven rates of growth. In India it is recognized that the *Gramdan* movement is the champion of the 'have-nots', and it initiates a dialogue on their behalf. We attempt to make the 'haves' realize that, in order to co-exist, they must share what they have.

- A How does the Central Government look upon your movement?

- B Our movement is anti-nobody. Some people feel that *Gramdan* is anti-class and others that it is anti-State, but the fact is that *Gramdan* is neither. It is pro-poor, and as it stands for equitable distribution, its success makes any physical violence unnecessary. The purpose of *Gramdan* is not to suppress the individual but to present his case as a member of society and to re-evaluate the mechanics of the social relationships which form the basis of civilized existence. The *Gramdan* approach is that the process is more important than the product. For the first time in the history of village life the council acts as a unit of self-government. It is an all-village body, run as a direct democracy and conducting village affairs on the basis of the equality of all.

To begin with, *Gramdan* villages were very sparsely scattered. Now we have whole districts under *Gramdans*, and this makes for easier administration. At the present time, Vinoba and his army of workers are engaged in bringing the entire State of Bihar into the *Gramdan* scheme. This will make possible a practical experiment on a state-wide scale and will show how non-violent decentralized self-government can work.

- A You did not touch on my question about the attraction of cities.

- B We must learn from our experience of cities. Initially, it seems to many people very attractive to move to a city, but when one has lived with the difficulties and problems of life in cities like New York or London it is very clear that the city has failed miserably to provide satisfying conditions for human living. Recently Mayor John Lindsay of New York said wearily, "The question now is whether we can continue to survive as a city". Crime in New York has become so widespread that many churches have to be kept locked even during daytime. One Catholic priest stated that crime has become just part of life in New York. In this,

the largest city in the world and the financial capital of the United States, poverty is appalling. By January, 1969 one million of its citizens will be supported by welfare relief, representing a tax drain on the other seven million and a severe handicap to city officials who would prefer to spend the money on improvements to the city. They are fighting a losing battle against the further spread of the ills which threaten to destroy it. These include the worst case of air pollution in the U.S.A., described by the Health Department as no longer inconvenient and irritant but a matter of life and death.

To see such a city Indians need not go to New York; they have only to visit Calcutta, where millions of people live in slums, sleep on pavements and pull rickshaws. Cities are the worst centres of human exploitation. If we cannot do away with them immediately, at least let us build a human, worthwhile and prosperous village life. The breakdown of rural life in India would compel villagers to flock to the cities and would result in mass unemployment and exploitation. The task of the *Gramdan* movement is to develop an alternative to the mass-producing and mass-consuming urban way of life and to aim at achieving a balanced structure. To bring this about we advocate an intermediate technology. This is the only way to avert disaster in the rural areas. Instead of initiating heavy industrial and engineering projects, such as steel works and dams, we are introducing thousands of small projects—minor crafts and industries, irrigation works, and so on. In this way the *Gramdan* movement demonstrates how the people can help themselves.

Urban-mindedness is a synonym for production- and consumption-mindedness, which is encouraged by both capitalism and dictatorships in order to facilitate the processes of exploitation and enslavement of the people. The minority in the cities will continue to live well

only as long as they can depend upon a ceaseless flow of food and raw materials from the majority in the rural areas.

Up to the present we have not tackled the cities and their problems. Eighty per cent of the Indian people still live in the rural areas, and we therefore feel that top priority must be given to making them self-supporting. When the requisite raw materials are produced locally, then the finished goods must be produced locally. Machinery must be communally owned. There must be no intermediary between the production and distribution stages. A society based on non-violence has no place for intermediate agencies. The first prerequisite for such a society is a thriving village industry.

To Gandhi, Indian independence meant the liberation of the poor and the exploited. The necessities of life were to be enjoyed by the average citizen in common with the rich. By this he did not mean that every man should live in a prince's palace, for palaces are not a necessity for man's happiness and advancement. The ultimate goal should not be confined to a high material living standard, which, in any case, merely over-complicates life and causes men to lose their way. One car, then two; a television set, then one in every room; an electric toothbrush and the like; these do nothing to improve the quality of their lives. Once started up the materialistic ladder of a high living standard, people never attain a sense of satisfaction.

A I can see that the *Gramdan* movement is a spiritual and human movement. It is not based on materialism. I understand that it provides a balancing point between the spiritual and the material. Am I right?

B Yes, you have got the point.

A But let me get it clear. You want no industrialization, no mass-production/consumption

economy. The implication of all this is that you want to keep India poor.

B When you have the rich, then only you have the poor. When there are no more riches, there will be no more poverty. With this logic I advocate neither poverty nor riches. To me, riches are as ugly and oppressive as poverty. The United States and Western Europe are enormously rich, but there still exists a depressing amount of poverty. So, my fight is equally directed against too much and too little money. I am for the normal condition of man. To me, superfluous wealth is not the normal condition. India has not only great poverty but also great riches. I stress the word 'great', because herein lies the problem. In some cases poverty can be a virtue and commendable, but this can never be so with excess riches. The West has achieved an extremely high level of wealth, but has this helped to solve its problems? Rather, it has served to increase them. The problems of the West are just as acute as those of India or the Third World; they differ only in number and content.

A Can you tell me precisely what danger you see in mass-production and industrialization?

B The destruction of the human personality.

A Could you make yourself more clear?

B To me, the human personality is based on inspiration, initiative and originality. When we are ruled by technocrats we are spoonfed everything we consume, but we lose the power to create for ourselves. Therefore, technocracy contributes in large measure to the destruction of the human personality.

A But surely the technocrat himself is creative?

B Yes, this is so, but as technology advances, so we require fewer and fewer technocrats—the experts and specialists who design the means

of production. The majority of us are left stranded in a wilderness of uselessness, with no compelling reasons to employ our initiative or to put into effect our creative ideas. Technology means specialists and standardization. Society in the Gandhian sense is a Society of Everyman, not of the specialist, whereas the technocratic society turns Everyman into a cypher.

Here is an example of what I mean. Take the quill pen and the typewriter. It is difficult to write with a quill pen, but easy to make one. The writer has to use it very carefully, artistically and efficiently in order to achieve the best results. The typewriter, on the other hand, is easy to use and difficult to make. It will take several specialists to design it and a factory-full of workers to manufacture it, but almost anyone can operate it. It is of no significance whether the typist possesses any creative talent, but it is of considerable importance that the writer with the quill should employ his initiative and creative talent. This simple instance demonstrates how the machine detracts from the individual's creativity.

Every man is, in himself, exceptional, unique and special. Technology erodes these priceless assets. The machine regiments mankind. If we must have standardization, then let it be a standardization of excellence.

Ever since feudalism and capitalism began, men have been developing the bad habit of getting slaves and servants to do their work. In this machine age the habit has been transferred in large measure from the slaves to machines. Instead of servants, people now want machines to work for them, but unfortunately, a machine is much more powerful than a slave, so, in the end man is becoming the slave of the machine. Because he cannot rid himself of his age-old bad habit, man now depends on the expert and the computer. This is yet another delegation of function, which

ends in man himself becoming functionless. The original aim in producing machines was to improve the capability, creativity and personality of man. That aim has long since gone by the board. What I want is to put man first. Man should be the creator and the machine merely an extension of his creative powers. Today, alas, the machine has taken over and controls society.

A But I can well understand that men want to avoid work.

B As I have said, we are still suffering from the feudal habit of wanting to avoid work, but this is not natural to man. What he is trying to do is to avoid working for his fellow-man and spend as much of his time as possible indulging in sports and recreations. However, such activities are no less tiring than work, but we have given a special value to them, and now man loves sport and hates work. This is a feudalistic reaction.

We cannot live on a diet of cream and cakes, but need some roughage. Doctors tell us that wholemeal bread and unpeeled apples are better for us than spongy white bread and peeled apples. The roughage in our diet has a special value. Similarly, in our lives we need some rough work, something strenuous and tiring. It follows that to off-load on to a machine every particle of our work is very bad for us and makes us less than human.

A We have travelled very far in our discussion. Could we go back to your philosophy of self-government? What happened after India got her Independence? Why did the successors of Gandhi—the Indian Government—fail to incorporate his philosophy into their official policies?

B This is very hard to say. Unfortunately, Gandhi had no time to put his ideas about self-government into practice. Less than a year after Independence he was dead. He did not have

the chance to create mass support for his plans, unlike Mao Tse Tung, who has had twenty years since the liberation of his country to proselytize his ideology. Gandhi did say that once British rule was ended he would go from village to village and man to man to educate the people for non-violent self-government. He felt that the political independence of India was only a first step towards a long programme of liberating the people from all kinds of rule. India, he said, had seen rule by one, rule by the few, and sometimes rule by many, but he wanted to establish 'rule by all' or 'rule by each'. The result was to be self-rule, but this did not accord with the philosophy and training of Pandit Nehru. As Arthur Koestler has observed: *Nehru's social outlook and political programme were formed during his European visit in the late 1920's at the dawn of the 'pink decade' by the then fashionable friends of British Left Wing Socialism. Its swamis were the Webbs, Harold Laski and the "New Statesman and Nation" group—with their enthusiastic beliefs in nationalization, the Soviet Five Year Plan, a centralized blueprint state economy, and their almost mystic horror of capitalism and private enterprise. In the intervening years Nehru had been much too busy to realise that Professor Laski and Webb were not the last word in Social Science ... The Constitution of 1949 was patterned on Western models. It contained no breath of the Gandhi spirit which had awakened and inspired the nation. Social and economic policies pursued during this first ten years disrupted the traditional structure of society and undermined its values but failed to provide convincing alternatives. There was no success in steering India's 300 million peasants out of their protoplasmic apathy; the short-lived euphoria after Independence yielded to disillusionment, frustration and cynicism. The cities of Le Corbusier, of Government offices and Planning Departments, have an air of*

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unreality about them, as if the politicians and five-year planners lived in another air-conditioned bathyscope, an hermetic world of abstraction, blue prints and paper resolutions inspired by wishful thinking. The result is a pseudo-Democracy in a political vacuum ... Experience of that decade has shown that Western-style Parliamentary Party Democracy is not for export to Asia. It was an illusion to regard it as a universal panacea. Even in some major countries of the Continent of Europe it has not worked very successfully. Rammed down the throat of an alien culture it produces convulsions.

I hope I have not bored you with this long quotation from Koestler, but I think this makes the point clear. Koestler goes on to say: An alternative solution can only emerge on specifically Indian lines. The enterprise of Vinoba nevertheless revealed the un-tapped resources of the nation, its responsiveness to an inspired appeal, its potential generosity, enthusiasm and self-sacrifice. It has also shown that this response comes from all strata of the population from Rajahs to harijans (the lowest caste), and that it cuts across all Party divisions which are to a large extent fictitious. With the Gramdan movement new trains of thought have emerged whose spokesmen propose to replace the Western-style Democracy mechanically copied from highly industrialised societies by a grass roots Democracy based on the traditional nuclei of independent self-government, the village councils together with the fostering of national crafts and regional industries. I believe that the salvation of India lies in a gradual transformation on some such lines discarding the petrified elements in past tradition and harnessing those spiritual resources which Gandhi and Vinoba revealed, to create, not an artificial, pseudo-Democracy, but—to coin a word—a home-grown Indocracy.

A For the construction and development of these villages you need a great amount of capital. Do you get some aid from the Government or from other countries?

B First of all we weigh up the existing resources. Human capital is the most important capital for us, and this is the factor ignored by economists, who base themselves on nineteenth century thinking. We do not start by assessing the amount of outside capital we can obtain to back our endeavours, but rather by estimating the capital we already possess and deciding how best to use it. Under the old system the village people go to the District Collector for aid and capital, sometimes for their cheap food shops, but the Collector finds he cannot help them, so he goes to the Provincial Government. The Provincial Government, in turn, refers the matter to the Central Government, who then add these requirements to the total of their requests for foreign capital and aid from, say, Britain, the U.S.A. or the U.S.S.R. Not only is this a time and energy-consuming operation, but it means complete dependence on others. We, therefore, deplore such methods. Each village must be as self-reliant as possible. Naturally, as long as the old system is still widely practised, advantage will be taken of foreign aid to augment the resources of the villagers. But it is a pernicious system, which serves only to maintain the evils of capitalism and bureaucracy. Moreover, my experience has been that foreign aid is of little help and seldom reaches those who need it most.

A But surely the developed nations must help the under-developed ones?

B Forgive me, but you are misinformed. India is certainly not an under-developed country; it is an over-exploited country. If other countries would cease their industrial, commercial and financial exploitation, that would be the very

best way of aiding India. Of course, I admire and respect the generous and compassionate feelings that motivate the donating of aid. The point I am trying to make is that charity and compassion should go hand in hand with justice. Charity in the unjust society is, more often than not, merely a way of whitewashing the injustice. What we are aiming at is a totally independent people, able to trade and co-operate peaceably with all other peoples on an equal footing to their mutual benefit.

Non-Violent Resistance

A You mentioned that there are 12,000 peace soldiers in your non-violent Peace Army—Sha. . . . what do you call it?

B *Shanti Sena*.

A Yes, *Shanti Sena*. Can you tell me what qualifications a peace soldier should have?

B In fact, there are no hard and fast qualifications and rules, but in general one can say that a peace soldier must have a living faith in non-violence and the courage to die without anger, without fear and without the desire for retaliation. In other words, he must have respect for the lives of all, even those who, in a violent society, are called 'enemies' and 'criminals'. Then again, the peace soldier must have equal regard for all religions, communities, races, nationalities and cultures. The work of the Peace Army can be done singly or in groups. Therefore no one need wait for his neighbours to start a local brigade. Generally speaking, the Peace Army's work is best done by people operating in their own localities.

The main task of a peace soldier is, by personal service, to build up contact with the people in his locality, so that when he has to deal with an ugly situation, he does not descend upon the members of a riotous assembly as a complete stranger, liable to be regarded as suspect or as an unwelcome visitor. He must, too, be known for his strict impartiality.

Generally there are previous warnings of

coming storms. If these are known, the Peace Army will not wait until the conflagration breaks out, but will take preventative action.

In fact, each centre works out its own constitution on the basis of local conditions. We offer no blueprint to govern the activities of the soldiers. Each soldier is entirely responsible for himself in his task of serving the community and for putting his principles into practice. Only if he has complete independence is he able to deal with every situation as it arises. If someone at a central point were to be responsible for directing his work the peace soldier would have to refer each and every matter to him. Such a bureaucrat, having no direct experience of the community in question, would be unable to make a judgment and give a right decision. What is more, precious time would be lost in waiting for him to get around to replying. The test of a good peace worker is the extent to which he can impose discipline on himself. For his service to the people he will rely upon his own insight and initiative. He will become known to every man, woman and child and share their joys and sorrows, rather than being engrossed in his own. Their sufferings he will regard as his own.

- A It seems that, although you have adopted the word ' army ', you have no rigid discipline such as that of the armed forces, with their group formations, their specialized training, their regimentation of thought and deed—their tight little world into which no extraneous ideas are permitted to penetrate.
- B You are quite right. In the Peace Army ideas circulate freely, for it is part of the underlying philosophy to give open-minded consideration to the contributions made by each individual. Each soldier is free to accept or reject any of the general pool of ideas, but if he has neglected to familiarize himself with all of it, it will be considered a serious omission.

A There must surely be some sort of coordination between the various groups of peace soldiers ?

B Yes, of course. What we have is a liaison headquarters in Varanasi in Northern India. Should the soldiers in one area ask for help, the most suitable people are sent at once from some other area, and the latter understand perfectly that they must carry out the requirements of the local soldiers.

I well remember one incident in Calcutta—a communal riot between Hindus and Muslims. The Peace Army in Calcutta called upon the liaison headquarters to send 200 more soldiers. Forthwith, 200 telegrams were sent, and those of us who had been mustered went straight to the city. We visited the trouble spots, trying to calm the people and persuade them not to be afraid. When we found two groups in the midst of a fight, we attempted to separate them. We diverted their attention by starting discussions and getting them to join us in a song.

A How do the people recognize you as peace soldiers ?

B We wear a kind of uniform on such occasions. It consists of a yellow head-scarf, an armband bearing the words 'Peace Soldier' and a yellow belt. This distinguishes us and makes us easily recognizable.

A What is the force that you exert ?

B A moral force ; it is derived from strength of character, or 'soul force'. Nothing else. During such operations we carry only needle and thread, scissors, bandages, a surgical knife, and the like for rendering first aid. We are given a little training in how to move and carry the wounded. We are also trained in fire-fighting, entering a burning building without ourselves getting burnt, how to climb heights, and so on.

We are primarily a Service Army ; only at times of violence do we become a Peace Army.

A How does the Peace Army behave in the face of armed internal or external aggression ?

B Before we start to defend we must know what exactly we are defending. Therefore, the first task of the Peace Army is to build, through the *Gramdan* movement, a free society whose people have been shown how to defend their freedom against internal exploitation or external aggression. Once we have established our non-violent, free society, there will be very little cause for aggression, but, should it occur, then the mass of the population, with the Peace Army to aid them, will adopt total non-cooperation with the aggressors.

A How can you possibly put non-cooperation into effect when faced, for example with an invading Chinese army ?

B In the first place, I do not believe the Chinese want to invade India. The 'invasion' of 1962 was, to my mind, a combination of border dispute and ideological challenge. The border dispute can be settled by mutual negotiation and the will to understand, while the ideological challenge can be countered by our own direct, courageous ideology—the ideology of non-violence and truth. I have repeated time and time again that the day we succeed with our non-violent revolution and rid ourselves of capitalism and exploitation, that will be the day when Mao Tse Tung will change his attitude towards us and become our friend. According to my judgement, Mao's challenge is not military but ideological.

Even if your assumption is correct and a Chinese army will invade India, then the people and the Peace Army will greet the Chinese army with flowers and food, with song and dance. At the same time, they will make it very clear to the Chinese that if they

have come with the idea of ruling the Indian people, they will find it utterly impossible. Indians will never produce food for them, nor will they run the factories, the railways, the postal services, and so on. They will sooner die in their millions. Opposed by such adamant and brave resistance, the invaders will be hamstrung. If they occupy the country at all, they will be faced with an insuperable task, for they will never conquer the people's souls. Without the cooperation of the common people they will not succeed in ruling India for even a week.

Look at Czechoslovakia. How shamefaced and embarrassed were the Russians. The resistance and non-cooperation of the Czechs and Slovaks is a unique example. If, by non-violent non-cooperation, the two hundred years of British rule was brought to an end in India, it is certain that organised mass non-cooperation will also put paid to any fresh invasion. All we require is the courage to put our theoretical philosophy into practice.

Public opinion throughout the world—even in the aggressors' own country—will shame those responsible for the invasion. Think of America. Has not America's part in the Vietnam war been condemned all over the world, including the United States itself? Did not the invasion of Czechoslovakia by the U.S.S.R. and her satellites give rise to a global storm of protest?

If you ask me whether I believe the people and their Peace Army could not defend their freedom, in return I ask you what guarantee there is that armed forces could do so. The reasoning behind my question requires no elaboration. The U.S.A., with the world's greatest military machine, has completely failed to win a victory in Vietnam, so how could tiny countries like Ceylon, or Afghanistan, or Yugoslavia, or Cambodia hope to defend themselves by military means. Today, the

mammoth expenditure on armies and arms is mainly a form of vested interest. It is the sheerest folly that the people allow such squandering of their wealth to be imposed on them.

A Are you really convinced that India can rely upon the moral strength of the Peace Army and the people themselves?

B Of course I am. When I think of what was achieved by the Indian people under Gandhi's leadership in their struggle for independence, I have not the slightest doubt that history can be repeated. India possesses enormous reserves of philosophical and spiritual strength. The British kept Gandhi and Nehru in gaol for years, but neither of them bore any ill will towards their gaolers. Hundreds and hundreds of people were lacerated by police sticks and truncheons and suffered the indignities of trial and imprisonment, but they have long since forgiven and forgotten and bear no malice towards the British people. India has even decided to retain English as one of her languages, even though Hindi has been adopted as the official language. This all results from the spirit of non-violence. Another instance is the *Gramdans*. Thousands of landlords, with absolute legal right to their land and who have owned it for centuries, have given it up for the benefit of their landless fellow Indians. Look at the Peace Army—thousands of young people are joining it. These are all signs of the spirit of non-violence in India. Therefore, I confidently nourish the hope that India will disarm unilaterally.

A I can see your point where total invasion is concerned, but have doubts about the solution of, say, the Kashmir dispute. What about the war between India and Pakistan?

B True. Problems created by action endemic in the violent society will take time to solve. I

do not live in cloud cuckooland and do not expect to wake up one fine morning to find that India has taken the decision to disarm; nor do I expect all problems to be settled in a flash. By becoming disarmament-minded, we can improve our relations with Pakistan immeasurably. At present, Pakistan feels it must negotiate with India from a position of military strength, and India adopts the same attitude. However, in order to treat with Pakistan from a position of true strength—moral strength—India must *reduce*, not increase, her armed forces. Non-violence creates new, dynamic strength. The army that must be built up is the Peace Army, which, with its emphasis on service, will arm the nation with inner strength. The Peace Army will have the support of the people and will be drawn from among them; its authority will derive from service to the people and will not be imposed upon them by armed might. Eventually, when the Peace Army, having completely replaced the armed forces, has served its purpose, it will automatically cease to exist. The ultimate aim of the non-violent society is to train every member to be a peace soldier. We do not envisage a stay-at-home uninvolved population protected by an armed elite. The peace-loving nation, as a whole, will participate in the creation and maintenance of a good way of life—good, not only for themselves, but for all other nations.

- A What is the yardstick by which you will measure the success of your Peace Army?
- B Vinoba has given us a very simple test to use. We shall know we have achieved success when, in any one area of operations, it will no longer be necessary to run a police force and to resort to the courts. Every citizen will, without compulsion, maintain law and order by playing a positive and constructive part in his own community. Peace will not be given to us simply by constant repetition of the

word. It is a word in daily use, even by those who cling to the concept of armed might and whose basis for the maintenance of order is fear—fear of one's neighbour, fear of one's colleague, fear of the other ' class ', fear of the other nation. Peace is gained by love, tolerance and understanding ; never by hate, intolerance and fear. To win peace we must increase our moral strength. Violence is weakness and breeds nothing but violence. With a broadly based Peace Plan, we shall gradually achieve a nation-wide Peace Army. By comparison with the disciplined strength of that army, one based on military compulsion will be seen to be ineffectual, will lapse into desuetude and wither away.

Some people suffer from the mistaken belief that there is no discipline in the concept of non-violence, but Vinoba tells his Peace Soldiers that a proper definition of non-violence is discipline. Non-violence generates discipline from within. Often, self-styled believers in non-violence have not understood this principle. They equate non-violence with indiscipline, and thus they never acquire strength. The strength of non-violent armies, unlike that of military forces, is not visible.

Constructive work and service are the methods of the non-violent Peace Army. While the military use guns, we use spades. The *Gramdan* movement provides the conditions wherein man's creative genius and desire to construct, rather than to destroy, is fostered. The Peace Army, firmly rooted as it is in the concepts of love, non-violence, and constructive, willing service, is the only true begetter of a Plan for Peace.

- A But you are such a small group.
- B That doesn't matter in the least. It does not worry us at all. We have truth on our side. We work like guerrillas to create more and more *Gramdans*. We walk from village to village carrying banners and posters. We march, we

sing, we speak. We establish good relations with the villagers, who come to understand that a peaceful revolution is theirs if they want it. Many people reject it; many others accept it, and the number of those who accept is mounting steadily. If, after a fairly lengthy period enlisting mass support, a landlord refuses to cooperate with us in forming a commune, then we turn to *satyagraha* and use non-violent resistance, non-co-operation, civil disobedience.

- A In the West, too, many radicals and progressives have accepted the philosophy of non-violent resistance as a means of focusing attention on their demands for peace and disarmament.
- B I must make my point clearer. Non-violent non-cooperation and resistance are the ultimate weapons. They can be used only by those who, in their own lives, strive for truth and non-violence. When all other methods have failed, then, and then only, does one resort to non-violent resistance. Moreover, the cause and the circumstances must be right. Only those who normally demonstrate the true spirit of willing cooperation may, when the need arises, employ the weapon of non-cooperation.

During the struggle for India's independence, when it had been decided to organize individual civil disobedience, Gandhi said: *I am not a fit person to start it. We need a person who has no anger and hate in his life, who has been able to keep a balance.* He searched for such a pure person, and he found Vinoba. Vinoba was then chosen as the first person to practise civil disobedience.

When carrying out civil disobedience, it is incumbent upon one to behave civilly and in an orderly manner, to present one's minimum demands, and to hold out until such demands have been met. Whatever punishment is

imposed for violation of a law must be willingly borne without any feelings of rancour. Training people for this role is one of the most important functions of the Peace Army.

- A Civil disobedience, or *satyagraha* as, you call it, implies the use of pressure. Surely such pressure is an indirect form of violence?
- B Not all forms of pressure are violent. The pressures of militarism and wealth are violent, but when one exerts moral pressure one is attempting to influence others by suffering oneself, at the same time refusing to be the victim of his violent pressure. As I have said, service comes before *satyagraha*. *Satyagraha* without service would degenerate into violent pressure; service without *satyagraha* would imply the acceptance of the *status quo*. You referred to the non-violent demonstrations currently occurring in the West. We shall have to wait and see whether the demonstrators have thought up any plans for positive service. The literal meaning of *satyagraha* is 'insistence on truth'. If you lack truth in your own life, how can you insist upon it? The way to express truth is through service.

Our minds are conditioned by tradition, family customs, education, history, religion and other similar factors. A person who wants to practise *satyagraha* must first be 'unconditioned', so that he may know how to search out the truth. Truth, of course is absolute, and we cannot make do with 'conditioned' truth. Merely to protest achieves nothing but frustration and disappointment. To be effective, a revolutionary movement based on non-violent resistance must derive its strength from a positive programme for living. I do not believe the Western peace movements have yet learned this lesson.

Finally, if you want to understand what we mean by non-violence, you cannot do better than read what Gandhi himself had to say

about it. I have, therefore, assembled here some quotations from his writings. These will help you to understand his concept of a non-violent social order.

A Thank you, I shall certainly read them.

Mahatma Gandhi on Non-violence

Just as one must learn the art of killing in the training for violence, so one must learn the art of dying in the training for non-violence.

It is no non-violence if we merely love those that love us. It is non-violence only when we love those that hate us.

... wherever you are confronted with an opponent conquer him with love.

No man could be actively non-violent and not rise against social injustice no matter where it occurred.

Passive resistance is a method of securing rights by personal suffering ; it is the reverse of resistance by arms.

If I do not obey the law and accept the penalty for its breach, I use soul-force. It involves sacrifice of self.

Everybody admits that sacrifice of self is infinitely superior to sacrifice of others. Moreover, if this kind of force is used in a cause that is unjust, only the person using it suffers. He does not make others suffer for his mistakes. Men have before now done many things which were subsequently found to have been wrong. No man can claim that he is absolutely in the right or that a particular thing is wrong because he thinks so, but it is wrong for him so long as that is his deliberate judgment. It is therefore meet that he should not do that which he knows to be wrong, and suffer the consequence whatever it may be. This is the key to the use of soul-force.

You might of course say that there can be no

non-violent rebellion and there has been none known to history. Well, it is my ambition to provide an instance.

It is the most harmless and yet equally effective way of dealing with the political and economic wrongs of the down-trodden portion of humanity.

If we are to be non-violent, we must then not wish for anything on this earth which the meanest or the lowest of human beings cannot have.

The principle of non-violence necessitates complete abstention from exploitation in any form.

A man cannot practise *ahimsa*¹ and be a coward at the same time. The practice of *ahimsa* calls forth the greatest courage.

Non-violence is 'not a resignation from all real fighting against wickedness'. On the contrary, the non-violence of my conception is a more active and real fight against wickedness than retaliation whose very nature is to increase wickedness.

Non-violence to be a potent force must begin with the mind. Non-violence of the mere body without the co-operation of the mind is non-violence of the weak or the cowardly, and has therefore no potency.

If I can have nothing to do with the organized violence of the government, I can have less to do with the unorganized violence of the people. I would prefer to be crushed between the two.

It is to me a matter of perennial satisfaction that I retain generally the affection and trust of those whose principles and policies I oppose. The South Africans gave me personally their confidence and extended their friendship. In spite of my denunciation of British policy and system I enjoy the affection

¹ Non-violence

of thousands of Englishmen and women, and in spite of unqualified condemnation of modern materialistic civilization, the circle of European and American friends is ever widening. It is again a triumph of non-violence.

I am but a weak aspirant, ever failing, ever trying. My failures make me more vigilant than before and intensify my faith. I can see with the eye of faith that the observance of the twin doctrine of truth and non-violence has possibilities of which we have but very inadequate conception.

In my opinion non-violence is not passivity in any shape or form. Non-violence, as I understand it, is the most active force in the world. . . . Non-violence is the supreme law. During my half a century of experience I have not yet come across a situation when I had to say that I was helpless, that I had no remedy in terms of non-violence.

Passive resistance is an all-sided sword; it can be used anyhow; it blesses him who uses it and him against whom it is used. Without drawing a drop of blood it produces far-reaching results. It never rusts and cannot be stolen.

Disobedience to be civil must be sincere, respectful, restrained, never defiant, must be based upon some well-understood principle, must not be capricious and above all, must have no ill-will or hatred behind it.

Buddha fearlessly carried the war into the enemy's camp and brought down on its knees an arrogant priesthood. Christ drove out the money-changers from the temple of Jerusalem and drew down curses from Heaven upon the hypocrites and the Pharisees. Both were for intensely direct action. But even as Buddha and Christ chastised, they showed unmistakable gentleness and love behind every act of theirs. They would not raise a finger against their enemies, but would gladly surrender themselves rather than the truth for which they

lived. Buddha would have died resisting the priesthood, if the majesty of his love had not proved to be equal to the task of bending the priesthood. Christ died on the cross with a crown of thorns on his head defying the might of a whole empire. And if I raise resistances of a non-violent character, I simply and humbly follow in the footsteps of the great teachers.

To say or write a distasteful word is surely not violent especially when the speaker or writer believes it to be true. The essence of violence is that there must be a violent intention behind a thought, word, or act, i.e., an intention to do harm to the opponent so-called. If non-violence of thought is to be evolved in individuals or societies or nations, truth has to be told, however harsh or unpopular it may appear to be for the moment.

Never has anything been done on this earth without direct action. I reject the word 'passive resistance' because of its insufficiency and its being interpreted as a weapon of the weak.

Non-violence presupposes ability to strike. It is a conscious, deliberate restraint put upon one's desire for vengeance. But vengeance is any day superior to passive, effeminate and helpless submission.

I can imagine a fully armed man to be at heart a coward. Possession of arms implies an element of fear, if not cowardice. But true non-violence is an impossibility without the possession of unadulterated fearlessness.

My creed of non-violence is an extremely active force. It has no room for cowardice or even weakness. There is hope for a violent man to be some day non-violent, but there is none for a coward.

I could see my way of delivering *ahimsa* to those who knew how to die, not to those who were afraid of death.

My non-violence does not admit of running

away from danger. Between violence and cowardly flight, I can only prefer violence to cowardice. I can no more preach non-violence to a coward than I can tempt a blind man to enjoy healthy scenes. Non-violence is the summit of bravery.

Whilst I may not actually help anyone to retaliate, I must not let a coward seek shelter behind non-violence so called.

Non-violence in its dynamic condition means conscious suffering. It does not mean meek submission to the will of the evil-doer, but it means pitting of one's whole soul against the will of the tyrant. Working under this law of our being, it is possible for a single individual to defy the whole might of an unjust empire to save his honour, his religion, his soul, and lay the foundation for that empire's fall or its regeneration.

I must continue to argue till I convert opponents or I own defeat. For my mission is to convert every Indian, even Englishmen, and finally the world, to non-violence for regulating mutual relations whether political, economic, social or religious. If I am accused of being too ambitious, I should plead guilty. If I am told that my dream can never materialize, I would answer 'that is possible', and go my way. I am a seasoned soldier of non-violence, and I have evidence enough to sustain my faith. Whether, therefore, I have one comrade or more or none, I must continue my experiment. The moral to be legitimately drawn from the supreme tragedy of the atom bomb is that it will not be destroyed by counter bombs, even as violence cannot be by counter violence. Mankind has to go out of violence only through non-violence. Hatred can be overcome only by love. Counter hatred only increases the surface, as well as the depth of hatred.

If India makes violence her creed, and I have survived, I would not care to live in India. She

will cease to evoke any pride in me. My patriotism is subservient to my non-violence. I cling to India like a child to its mother's breast, because I feel that she gives me the spiritual nourishment I need. She has the environment that responds to my highest aspiration. When that faith is gone, I shall feel like an orphan without hope of ever finding a guardian.

I would categorically state my conviction that the mania for mass production is responsible for the world crisis.

Mass production takes no note of the real requirement of the consumer.

If all countries adopted the system of mass production there would not be a big enough market for their products. Mass production must then come to a stop.

What is the cause of the present chaos? It is exploitation, I will not say, of the weaker nations by the stronger, but of sister nations by sister nations. And my fundamental objection to machinery rests on the fact that it is machinery that has enabled these nations to exploit others.

What I object to, is the 'craze' for machinery, not machinery as such. The craze is for what they call labour-saving machinery. Men go on 'saving labour' till thousands are without work and thrown on the open streets to die of starvation. I want to save time and labour, not for a fraction of mankind, but for all; I want the concentration of wealth, not in the hands of a few, but in the hands of all. Today machinery merely helps a few to ride on the back of millions. The impetus behind it all is not the philanthropy to save labour, but greed. It is against this constitution of things that I am fighting with all my might.

The supreme consideration is man. The machine should not tend to make atrophied the limbs of man.

I would say that if the village perishes, India

will perish too. India will be no more India. Her own mission in the world will get lost. The revival of the village is possible only when it is no more exploited. Industrialization on a mass scale will necessarily lead to passive or active exploitation of the villagers as the problems of competition and marketing come in. Therefore we have to concentrate on the village being self-contained, manufacturing mainly for use. Provided this character of the village industry is maintained, there would be no objection to villagers using even the modern machines and tools that they can make and can afford to use. Only they should not be used as a means of exploitation of others.

I suggest that we are thieves in a way. If I take anything that I do not need for my own immediate use and keep it, I steal it from somebody else. . . . if only everybody took enough for himself and nothing more, there would be no pauperism in this world, there would be no man dying of starvation in this world.

I hate privilege and monopoly. Whatever cannot be shared with the masses is taboo to me.

It is open to the world . . . to laugh at my dispossessing myself of all property. For me the dispossession has been a positive gain. I would like people to compete with me in my contentment. It is the richest treasure I own. Hence it is perhaps right to say that though I preach poverty, I am a rich man !

It is good enough to talk of God whilst we are sitting here after a nice breakfast and looking forward to a nicer luncheon, but how am I to talk of God to the millions who have to go without two meals a day? To them God can only appear as bread and butter.

By the non-violent method, we seek not to destroy the capitalist, we seek to destroy capitalism.

My non-cooperation with him (capitalist) will

open his eyes to the wrong he may be doing.

All exploitation is based on cooperation, willing or forced, of the exploited. . . . there would be no exploitation if people refused to obey the exploiter.

Quotations from *All Men Are Brothers*. a UNESCO publication.

Some friends have told me that truth and non-violence have no place in politics and wordly affairs. I do not agree. I have no use for them as a means of individual salvation. Their introduction and application in everyday life has been my experiment all along. For me, politics bereft of religion are absolute dirt, ever to be shunned. Politics concerns nations and that which concerns the welfare of nations must be one of the concerns of a man who is religiously inclined, in other words, a seeker after Truth.

Mahatma Gandhi



' Satish, who is thirty-one, would rather be called peace guerrilla than revolutionary. He's closely involved with a phenomenal mushrooming movement in India called *Gramdan*, village-sharing. With the leader Vinoba Bhave he has been helping to found mini-governments in 60,000 Indian villages. " There are 500,000 villages in India and our ultimate aim is to found 500,000 village republics entirely independent of central government ". The peace guerrillas go everywhere by foot, suggest to villagers that they form village councils, village courts, village banks. Then they move on, leaving a few guerrillas, usually women, to help with day-to-day problems. There are 12,000 guerrillas in this non-violent peace army (*shanti sena*) now.

They have no funds and live off the land, and Satish has the training for it. From the age of nine to eighteen he was brought up in a Jain monastery, complete with shaved head, and begging bowl. " My three brothers are in the jute business. My mother felt it would be a good insurance to have a member of the family in religion ". He turned his back on religion when he read a book by Gandhi which confirmed his belief that a monk's life was selfish '.

Sunday Times—7th July, 1968.

Satish went around the world on foot in order to demand disarmament. He walked 8,000 miles and took $2\frac{1}{2}$ years. Then he wrote a book which won the Soviet Land Nehru Award, but he returned it to the Russians saying " Before they award me they should free their imprisoned writers ".

Satish is one of the best-known interviewers in India. He has interviewed Martin Luther King, Lord Attlee, Lord Mountbatten, Linus Pauling, Pearl S. Buck, Alberto Moravia, Gunther Grass, Milovan Djilas, Joan Baez and many more for his paper *Dharmyug* (*The Times of India* publication).

He was invited for a lecture tour to England by Christian Action in 1968.